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EXPLANATION

OF THE

OUR FATHER AND THE HAIL MARY.

WITH NUMEROUS EXAMPLES, PARABLES, AND INTERESTING ANECDOTES DRAWN FROM

Holy Scripture, the Lives of the Saints, the Doctors of the Church, and other Sources.

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN BY

REV. RICHARD BRENNAN, LL.D.

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EXPLANATION

OF THE

OUR FATHER AND THE HAIL MARY.

PRAYER IN GENERAL.

MEANING OF PRAYER.

In prayer we raise our hearts to God and hold intercourse with Him through pious thoughts and affections. Every thought of God, every look towards Him is a prayer if it be only accompanied with pious sentiments. Hence we pray whenever we think of God or His infinite perfections, and feel ourselves penetrated with joy, reverence, love, admiration, and other good affections. We pray whenever we call to our minds the benefits we have received from our Creator, Sustainer, and Father, and are thereby moved to sentiments of gratitude; that too is prayer. Whenever, in the hour of danger, our virtue and innocence being at stake, conscious of our own helplessness we beg for help, that is prayer. Finally, when, in sorrow for our sins, we turn to God and weep because

we have offended a kind Father, angered a stern Judge, and strayed away from our chief and only good, our last end; when we implore forgiveness of our sins and promise future rectitude of life—that is prayer.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

There is nothing more admirable, more effectual, more useful to man than a prayer which ascends to God like incense from the altar of a simple and contrite heart. It lifts us up to God, lessens our troubles, strengthens our weaknesses, intensifies our virtues, opens heaven's gates, overcomes the power of hell—in a word, it is all-powerful. Strong and mighty is a king, and all must obey his signal. Strong and mighty among the animals is the lion, who exceeds them all in power, and by his very voice sends terror to the hearts of both man and beast. Strong and mighty among the elements are fire and water. The force of the latter nothing can withstand. The former, in one brief hour, can lay a city in ashes. Yet stronger far than any of these is prayer, especially the prayer of the just man; for him not even the Almighty God can withstand, for His divine heart is overcome. Hence for the acquisition of virtue and the repression of sin there is no means more effectual than prayer. On this point St. Ephrem says very aptly: "Prayer restrains pride, soothes revenge, expels envy, and leads to piety. Prayer

blesses the individual with fortitude, the family with prosperity. Prayer is the seal of the virgin, the safeguard of married life, the defence of the traveller, the guardian of the sleeping, the refuge of the waking, the fruitfulness of the soil, the safety of the tempest-tossed mariner. Prayer defends the condemned, ransoms the captive, comforts the mourner. Prayer is the crown of the living, and relieves the dead in purgatory. Prayer is the fountain of untold goodness. It is mightier than a king. Nothing so effectually dispels sloth and tepidity as prayer. Whosoever prays in his hour of trial shall receive many consolations in his soul. To sinners prayer is a mother, a mother who heals with the tears she sheds."

NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Prayer is as essential to spiritual life as food and air are to natural existence. Hence Our Saviour impresses upon us, both by His word and example, the necessity of prayer. He says: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Matt. vii. 7.) He set us the example by passing whole nights in prayer. (Luke vi. 12.) Besides, He has made prayer necessary for the obtaining of many favors; for without prayer we secure not even the necessary grace of preserving from beginning to end: Your Father from heaven giveth the good Spirit *to them that ask Him.* (Luke xi. 13.) Not to pray

and yet to remain free from sin, not to pray and yet to desire eternal felicity, is like trying to see without eyes, talk without a tongue, hear without ears, walk without feet.

From its very necessity it follows that prayer is a sacred duty incumbent upon us, to be discharged willingly and industriously, for he who does not pray will receive nothing.

QUALITIES OF PRAYER.

1. We should prepare ourselves to pray. If we were going to talk with a prince or some great lord we would first collect our thoughts, reflect upon what we were going to say, how we could present our petition, and even how we could make the best personal appearance. How much more cautious should we be when we are going to pray! For then we do not talk with a man, nor with a prince, nor yet a great one of this earth, but with God, the supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, before Whom all knees bend. Hence the Holy Ghost says: "Before prayer prepare thy soul: and be not as a man that tempteth God." (Ecclus. xviii. 23.) The harper tunes his instrument before he begins to play in presence of his patron. So should we dispose the chords of our hearts, that they may sound sweetly in the ear of the Most High. Therefore, before beginning your prayer, compose your thoughts, and keep in mind that you are in the pres-

ence of God, Who sees you and knows all that you do, think, and speak.

2. We should pray with devotion. When we pray our heart should feel what our lips utter ; for God regards the heart of the petitioner, and not his lips. "In prayer," says St. Bonaventure, "the voice of the heart should be heard rather than that of the mouth." Nothing displeases God more than a distracted and inattentive prayer. Hence He has complained of those who pray only with their lips, while their minds are filled with wandering thoughts. He says: "This people honoreth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me." (Matt. xv. 8.) Away, then, with all distractions; for if we admit them freely, they become sinful. We should struggle against them by keeping out of our minds, as much as possible, when at prayer, all thoughts of worldly matters, and place ourselves in the presence of God.

3. We should pray with humility. When we have recourse to prayer we should humble ourselves and acknowledge first of all our own weakness and necessity of help. "When we pray," says St. Augustine, "we are beggars who ask alms from God. Now if a beggar filled with pride should ask for a favor, what would he get in return? Instead of the gentle gift, certainly a severe rebuke of his proud and unbecoming conduct. So it fares with him who prays without humility." David, that great and mighty king, in the humility of his heart

acknowledged his poverty and nothingness. Hence when kneeling in prayer before God he exclaimed: "Lord, I am needy and poor: O God, help me." (Ps. lxix. 6.) When we pray we should humble ourselves by acknowledging our sinfulness and unworthiness. Let us call to mind the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican. (Luke xviii.) The former prays with pride, praising his fasting and prayers; the other prays with humility, acknowledging himself a sinner, striking his breast, and not daring to look up to heaven. Every one knows the result of these two very different prayers. The prayer of the Pharisee was rejected, that of the publican was heard. The former by his pride invited rejection of himself and his prayer; the other was justified before God on account of his humility. Therefore the prayer that is effective for eternal life must be based on humility and rest on the mercy of God, as is becoming.

4. We should pray with faith and confidence, without which there is no true and efficient prayer. Hence St. Augustine says: "If your faith sinks, the ardor of your prayer sinks; for how can he pray who does not believe?" And St. Bernard writes: "Our confidence decides the measure of grace that we receive from God: if our confidence is great, we shall receive great graces. For divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain; he who carries to it the largest vessel of confidence will draw from it the largest quantity of good. The oil of Thy

mercy, O Lord, Thou pourest out into the largest vessels of confidence." Hence St. James says (i. 6): "Ask in faith, nothing wavering." And why should we not ask with faith and confidence? Are we not applying to a God Who is all-powerful and full of charity, Who is able to give us all good, and Who, for the sake of Jesus, is willing to give, as the same Saviour plainly promises when He says: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you?" (John xvi. 23.)

5. We should pray with resignation to God's will. "We should not," says St. Francis of Sales, "ask of God to receive any gift at this or that place, in this or that manner, for this or that time. Our prayer and wish should be general. We should prescribe limits for God no more than a sick and ignorant patient should dictate to his physician what treatment to follow. We should, then, ask only for those things that correspond to the will of God and are useful to our souls." It was thus that the leper in the Gospel prayed. He did not say, "Lord, make me whole," but, "Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." (Luke v. 12.) It was thus, too, that Christ Himself prayed in the Garden of Olives: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice" of affliction "pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.)

6. We should pray with perseverance. St. Greg-

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ory says: "God wishes to be implored, importuned, ay, to be as it were compelled; hence He does not let us wait long. But some delay is not a refusal by any means, but rather a right salutary test. He wishes thus to increase within us the ardor of our longing, to try our fidelity, and to teach us to appreciate the value of His gifts." Therefore do not weary in your praying.

FOR WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY.

"Seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice," says Christ to us. Hence first of all we should pray for faith, hope, and charity; for victory over our passions, for grace and strength to do good, for perseverance in virtue—in short, for all good that contributes to the glory of God and our own salvation. We are permitted to pray for temporal goods, for the necessaries of life and health, for prosperous times, for success in our lawful undertakings, for deliverance from evil, and the like. Yet we should ever be animated with sentiments of complete resignation to God's will. More especially should we pray for the grace to live and die in the love of God.

FOR WHOM WE SHOULD PRAY.

The believing Christian will pray not only for himself, but also for his fellow-men. To this we are plainly advised by St. Paul, when he says: "I desire therefore first of all that supplications,

prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and chastity." (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.) We should also pray for all without exception, without regard to religion or race—for friends and enemies, for just men and sinners, for heretics and infidels, for the living and the dead. Especially should we pray for rulers, for spiritual and temporal authorities, that both civil and ecclesiastical order be preserved and strengthened. Still more particularly should children pray for their parents, and parents for their children.

And we should pray thus earnestly for one another: 1. Because it is good and salutary for ourselves as well as for those for whom we pray; 2. Because it is highly pleasing to God to do so.

Mutual prayer is good and salutary for ourselves, for never does a person pray as ardently for himself as when he is praying for another. You offer your prayer for all other Christians, and all other Christians offer their prayer for you. You may now and then, perhaps, make a careless or tepid prayer while thousands are repeating a fervent and acceptable prayer for you.

Mutual prayer profits those whom we pray for, for very often God grants to them, on account of our prayers, the graces which we ask for them, as, for example, the grace of conversion, or the grace of the true faith, and the like.

Finally, mutual prayer is very pleasing to God, for He is a God of charity. Hence St. Chrysostom writes: "When we pray for ourselves we are in a manner forced by nature, but to pray for others is a work of love and grace. It is natural to pray for ourselves—our misery forces us to do it—but to pray for others is a work of the purest charity."

TIME FOR PRAYER.

Christ says we should pray without ceasing. St. Paul adds, "Pray always." As God is at all times with us, offering us His favors, so should our souls be always with Him. Notwithstanding our business and work, it is possible for us to pray always. For, if we perform all our actions out of love for God, if by pious intention we dedicate all our thoughts, words, and works to Him, and offer to Him all our joys and sorrows—in a word, if we follow the counsel of the Apostle when he says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do: do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31)—when we so live and work, when we do all for God, as He did everything for us, then we pray without ceasing. And how easy it is for us to offer to God all our deeds and omissions!—a hasty look towards heaven, a short prayer, such as: "All for Thee, O Lord," "To Thy greater glory," and so forth, in order to unite ourselves to God, and thus make all our life one continued prayer.

We should especially pray:

1. Morning and night.

2. Before and after meals.

3. At the striking of the clock, before all important undertakings, in temptation, in care and trouble, in personal and public afflictions.

Morning prayer is particularly necessary and useful. As the body, when emerging from sleep in the morning, needs food to strengthen it for the day, so too does our soul, in the morning, need spiritual nourishment in order to discharge its duties of the day to the honor of God, to persist in its struggles, and to bear its disappointments with Christian patience. This kind of spiritual morning food consists in morning prayer.

Another motive for morning prayer is the fact that we owe to God the first fruits of the young day. These are the most pleasing in His sight, and through them we sanctify all the others. By them we draw down a blessing from heaven early. They are the morning dew that freshens and strengthens us for the rest of the day. Hence Our Lord Himself urges us to morning prayer when He says, through His prophet Amos, "Bring in the morning your victims," or offerings (Amos iv. 4); and also in Ecclus. xxxii. 18, where He speaks plainly of the blessing that rests on morning prayer: "They that will seek Him"—that is, the Lord—"early shall find a blessing."

Since morning prayer is so useful, bringing us

so many blessings, it should never be omitted, and all hindrances to it should be removed. Our great arch-enemy knows well what graces and blessings are brought upon us by morning prayer, and hence he leaves no means untried to keep us from the performance of this salutary practice, or at least to render it imperfect. Either he detains us in bed so long that there is no time left for prayer, or else he holds up before our vision, the moment we rise, the many and pressing worldly duties to be performed, and so, grudging the time necessary for prayer, we hurry off to our work or business. Let us not begin the day by falling into his snares. No matter how pressing our duties, let us first hold converse with God. The more urgent and necessary those duties, the more need have we of God's grace and presence. The few moments devoted to our morning devotion will be amply supplied during the day by increased help from heaven.

Our morning devotions should consist: 1, of heartfelt thanks for a good night's rest and for the privilege of seeing another new day; 2, in making good resolutions for the coming day; 3, in praying for help and guidance in passing the day.

As every day, in the Temple of Jerusalem, morning and evening sacrifices were offered up, so should our devotions ascend before the throne of God, like sweet offerings of incense, morning and evening. Common gratitude to God

demands this. Would we not be guilty of the basest ingratitude to God were we to lie down at night without remembering the many benefits He has bestowed upon us during the day? But not gratitude alone, our own self-interest should induce us to say our night prayers, for during the darkness and uncertainty of the long night we need God's protection and guardianship; hence we should pray for that blessing.

Then our night devotions should consist: 1, in thanking God for the benefits of the day just closed; 2, in recalling to mind how we have made use of these benefits, and then bewailing our faults and resolving on an amendment of our lives; 3, in commending ourselves to the protecting hand of God during the coming night.

Examination of conscience at night is very salutary. Alas, how many souls are in eternal damnation because they omitted this holy practice! A sudden death seized them in the midst of their sleep, and, being in mortal sin, they were hurled into hell. Had they, before retiring, examined their consciences and made an act of contrition, they might have obtained pardon for their sins and secured the salvation of their immortal souls.

Every good gift comes from above and needs the blessing of God. Even the food we eat comes from God, and is distributed among us by God. Hence it is highly proper that we

should send up to Him, before and after our meals, acts of petition and of thanks. Of this duty of prayer before and after meals we are reminded by St. Paul, who writes: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do: do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

It is a sad state of affairs among Christians when so many are ashamed of their prayers and are beginning to omit them altogether. We cannot wonder that the blessing of God is taking leave of so many families, and want and misery are entering in instead; for, as St. Chrysostom says, nothing goes wrong in that family where the members begin and end with God, while want and destitution creep in where He is forgotten.

Whether we eat at home or abroad, we should pray, before doing so, that God may bless the viands, and after eating return thanks for His benefits.

The Catholic Church, by the sound of the Angelus bell, reminds us three times a day of that unspeakably grand benefit, the incarnation of the Divine Son, and bids us reflect upon it with grateful hearts; and also not to forget the ever-blessed Virgin who brought into the world its loving Saviour. The words of the Angelus devotion are as old as the Scriptures, from whence they are taken. The order to ring the Angelus bell three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, and to repeat the Hail Marys, was issued by Pope

Urban II. at the Council of Clermont, in the year 1095.

Even the Turks turn three times in the day their faces towards the city of Mecca, in order to thank their prophet for the gift of their belief. Would it not then be a disgrace for a Catholic to be ashamed, when he hears the Angelus bell, to uncover his head, to do honor to the grandest mystery of his faith, and to commend himself to the powerful protection of Mary?

In all our important undertakings, in temptation, in sorrow and affliction, in persecution—in a word, in all our affairs, we should have recourse to prayer.

THE PLACE TO PRAY.

We should, for we can, pray in all places—in open nature or in our quiet rooms, in the field or at home, in the office and in the workshop.

But we should pray especially in the church, for: 1. The church is really a house of prayer, as Christ Himself tells us in Matt. xxi. 13. Here dwelleth our God, living in the Blessed Sacrament, more disposed than anywhere else to bestow graces upon us. 2. Besides, in the church we have not only facility and opportunity for prayer, but also mutual example and edification. 3. Then the common prayer recited in the church by all together brings us greater advantages, as Christ told us when He said: "If two of you shall consent upon

earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 19.) If the prayer in common between two petitioners is so powerful, what can be effected by the united prayer of a whole congregation?

FAULTS AT PRAYER.

Why is it that our prayers are not always heard? Because they are often defective. Sometimes we do not pray for the right thing, at other times we do not pray in the right way.

Often we do not pray for the right thing. Many pray for the things of this world and for temporal prosperity, not bestowing a thought on their sins nor on heaven. Solomon understood what to pray for, and therefore found a ready hearing on the part of God. Not so King Jeroboam. This man raised his hand against God's prophet, and it withered instantly. Then he said to the prophet, "Pray for me that my hand be restored." Instead of seeking pardon for his sin in attempting to assault the prophet, he prayed for the recovery of his hand, thinking only of it, and not at all of his soul. So it happens often. When man suffers worldly losses he laments and grieves, deplores the bad times, rebels at loss of health, and running to God's prophet of the New Law, the priest, he cries: "Pray for me that my losses may be made good, that I may recover my health," and

so on. But the affairs of the soul give the least concern.

Often we do not pray in the right manner. Many pray with distractions, many with false hearts, many without the slightest amendment in their way of living. Many, again, when praying, look only for sweetness and internal consolation, which if they do not feel at once, they fall from their zeal in prayer. Many pray with slothfulness, dryness, and coldness. Finally, many are wanting in confidence and perseverance.

THE OUR FATHER.

Introduction.

GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE OUR FATHER.

INSTRUCTION.

THE greatest and sublimest prayer is the "Our Father," or the "Lord's Prayer," and this (1) on account of its origin, (2) on account of its contents, (3) on account of its beauty and power. The "Our Father" originated with Jesus Christ Himself. He it was Who taught it to us; therefore it is called the "Lord's Prayer."

One of the disciples once found the divine Redeemer engaged in prayer. He saw with what ardor, with what fervor, Christ prayed. He saw that his Lord and Master was in truth also the master of prayer. The sight filled him with reverent wonder; and, carried away with the desire to pray as ardently and devoutly, with as much fervor and unction, as his divine Master, he confidently approached and besought Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Teach us to pray from our inmost hearts, as Thou dost, and as Thou alone canst. Then Jesus, turning lovingly to His disciples, said: "When you are praying, speak not

much, as the heathens; for they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them; for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him. Thus therefore shall you pray:

"Our Father Who art in heaven,

"Hallowed be Thy name.

"Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.

"And lead us not into temptation,

"But deliver us from evil. Amen."

In regard to its import, the Our Father is the most excellent and most sublime prayer, for it contains all that we can expect from God, and tells how to pray to God, and what to ask for. If we examine all the prayers contained in the Bible we shall not find anything that is not already contained in the Lord's Prayer.

Rightly does St. Cyprian style the Lord's Prayer "the Gospel abridged."

The Our Father, finally, is the most excellent of all prayers, because it has greater power and value before God than any other prayer.

This is a certain truth, for Christ tells us to ask in His name and we shall infallibly receive what we ask. Now, never do we pray so truthfully in His name as when we pray in His own words.

Hence there can be no more powerful prayer than that which Jesus taught us.

The Our Father consists of a preface and seven petitions, of which the first three relate to the promoting of God's glory, and the other four to the welfare of body and soul for ourselves and fellowmen, for time and eternity.

VARIOUS COMMENTS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Tertullian.

Tertullian, that ancient priest of the Church in Carthage, a distinguished teacher and writer, writes thus concerning the Lord's Prayer: "How brief in words, yet how rich in matter, is the Lord's Prayer! It not only contains a prayer as it should be, not only the correct method of honoring God, and the things for which men should pray, but also all that the Lord taught and ordained; so that, in fact, the whole Gospel condensed is to be found in it. On this prayer are to be founded all other prayers, and all others are to be sealed and stamped with it."

St. Cyprian.

This holy Church father says of the Lord's Prayer: "How full of mystery, beloved brethren, is the Our Father! How many and what great things are contained within it! How manifold its spiritual meaning! So much so, that nothing is left out. Everything for which we could ask is

contained within this short epitome of heavenly teachings."

Thomas à Kempis.

The devout and venerable Thomas à Kempis speaks of the sublimity and excellence of Our Father in words bordering on inspiration. He says: "Amid all that is noble there is nothing nobler than virtue; amid all that is fair there is nothing fairer than chastity; amid all knowledge there is none higher than wisdom; amid all books of devotion there is none more salutary than the Life of Christ; amid all prayer and praise there is none better or holier than the Our Father. The Lord's Prayer surpasses all the prayers of the saints, it exceeds all the love affections of inspired and ardent souls. It contains in itself all the sayings of the prophets and the honeyed words of the psalms and canticles. It asks for all that is necessary. It praises God becomingly, penetrates the clouds, ascends above the angels, carries the mind to heaven, and unites the soul with God. Happy is he who ponders well all the words of the Lord, the golden words of the Our Father."

The Widow of Thecua.

In the fourteenth chapter of the Second Book of Kings we read that Joab employed a simple widow woman to reconcile David with his son

Absalom, who had fallen into disfavor. Having learned from Joab the words to be used, the good widow repaired to the presence of the king, and falling on her knees made known the object of her coming. David, very much moved, inquired of the woman who had instructed her. She answered, "My king and my master, the words that I have spoken to thee have been put into my mouth by thy faithful servant Joab." At once the king granted the widow's prayer.

What may we not obtain from God if we approach Him with a prayer containing the words of His own beloved Son? May we not say to Him, in the words of the woman of Thecua: "My Lord and my king, the words that I address to Thee have been put into my mouth, not, indeed, by Thy faithful servant Joab, but by Thy own divine Son." Will not such language move the Lord to give us what we ask and need?

Jordan, General of the Dominican Order.

A priest of his monastery once asked the blessed Jordan, general of the Dominican Order, how they would ever be able to thank God suitably and sufficiently for all the abundant alms bestowed on their monastery by kind and generous benefactors. The holy man replied: "One single Our Father, if said with true inward devotion, is a rich compensation for all bene-

fits received. This short prayer will bring down blessings from heaven on all who bestow alms in true Christian charity on the poor and destitute.

The Prelude to the Our Father.

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN."

INSTRUCTION.

As is becoming, the Lord's Prayer opens with a prelude. Whenever we ask some great personage for a favor we do not begin by abruptly saying, "Give me this, or give me that." We make some kind of an introduction. Is it not, then, becoming that we should first honor with His appropriate title our loving God and Lord of heaven and earth before we presume to ask for a favor? Hence we address God here with the words, "Our Father, Who art in heaven."

Our divine Saviour Himself directed us, whenever we pray to God, to address Him, not as "Creator," "Lord," or "Majesty," but simply as "Father," for He wished to encourage us to draw near to the eternal Father with love and confidence.

The title Creator, Lord, Majesty, contains the idea of grandeur and severity, and is apt to beget fear within our hearts. The word Father, on the contrary, reminds us of all the good that

God has bestowed upon us, and this remembrance awakes within us a happy confidence that He Who gave without being asked, gave us so much unspeakable good, will also grant us the gifts for which we do ask if they be for our spiritual benefit.

Christ is really the only-begotten Son of God. As far as we are concerned, who are children of God only by grace of adoption, God is our common Father. Hence we are all brothers and sisters, and as such are obliged to love one another, and also to pray that our brethren may receive the good things which we ask for ourselves.

Hence Christ teaches us to say *our* Father, and not *my* Father.

The words "Who art in heaven" were added by Christ in order to distinguish the one true God Who dwells chiefly in heaven from the false gods which the heathens believe to dwell in the woods, mountains, lakes, and rivers. By this our divine Saviour wished to strengthen us in the true faith, and to guard us against the worship of all false gods. Also, by these words we acknowledge that we are here below but pilgrims, and that our true home is in heaven; for where the Father is, there too should the children be.

Lastly, these words remind us that when we pray we should divest ourselves of all earthly thoughts, and fix our attention on heaven.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10.) "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)." (Rom. viii. 15.) "You are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26, etc.) "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God." (1 John iii. 1.) "But be not you called Rabbi; for one is your Master, and all you are brethren. And call none your Father upon earth: for one is your Father, Who is in heaven." (Matt. xxiii. 8, 9.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"In order to enkindle and encourage within us men child-like confidence, Jesus Christ attributed to the Lord no other name but the loving one of Father. He could have styled Him Creator, Lord, or His Majesty; but He did not, for such terms imply sternness and severity, and might beget in us a certain fear. But the name Father suggests love and generates confidence, and hence it is prefixed as the first word to the Lord's Prayer." (St. Francis of Sales.) "Great,

indeed, dearly beloved, is this mystery of grace, and admirable the favor above all other favors, that God calls man, child, and man calls God, Father." (Leo the Great.) "Oh, what a royal word, so full of sweetness and loving consolation: with fervent devotion should man utter it. What mortal would have ever dared to call Thee Father, Who art the almighty Ruler, if Thy only-begotten Son had not permitted it?" (Louis of Granada.) "If God is my Father, it belongs to His nature that He love me and grant me all things necessary, that He guide me, protect me, defend me, advise me, instruct me, and when necessary, punish me: that He consider me His child and make me His heir." (The same.) "In order that we may pray to God with confidence Our Saviour taught us that when we pray to God in the Lord's Prayer for the graces necessary to our salvation, all of which are contained in that prayer, we should call Him Father, and not Lord. Our Father: for He wishes that when we ask God for graces, we should do it with the same confidence as a poor sick son would ask his earthly father for help and medicine. If, for example, a son were dying of hunger, it would certainly be enough for him to inform his father, and the latter would furnish him with food. Or if the son had been bitten by a poisonous serpent, it would be enough to show the wound to his father, and the latter would apply a remedy." (St. Alphonsus Liguori.)

"You are all children of God, therefore you should be of one heart and one mind, that you may be able to say worthily 'Our Father.'" (St. Chrysostom.) "Christ did not teach us to say 'my Father,' but 'our Father,' that we may pray in common and for one another. The Lord's Prayer is then also the public and common prayer of Christians." (St. Cyprian.) "We must exert ourselves to be in truth children of God. For God is only then our Father when we work for good. On the contrary, He becomes our judge when we commit sin." (St. Ambrose.) "The Lord's Prayer is universal, including all the faithful inasmuch as they are all at once our brothers in Christ and children of the same heavenly Father. Hence Our Saviour did not wish that we should say 'give me,' but 'give us'; not 'forgive me,' but 'forgive us;' not 'my Father,' but 'our Father;' that we might thereby infer that the welfare of our fellow-men should be as near our hearts as our own welfare. Under this Father the master and his servants are brothers. Under this Father the general and the soldier are brothers. Under this Father the rich and poor are the brethren. On the earth Christians have divers fathers, some noble, some plebeian, but they all invoke one Father Who is in heaven." (St. Augustine.) "In the name Father there is contained a sure and favorable reception; for before we pray, we

have already received the great favor of being permitted to say 'Our Father.' What, then, will be refused to His suppliant children by a God Who has already permitted them to be His children?" (The same.)

COMPARISON.

Every one when writing to his parents or friends, and more especially to an unknown person, will preface his letter with some mode of address suitable to the person's dignity and calling. Higher than all earthly dignitaries is God, Whom we should address with His proper title, when about to offer Him a prayer. If, in ordinary life, we endeavor to give terms of respect to our fellowmen, should we not endeavor to pronounce with the utmost reverence the salutation "Our Father, Who art in heaven"?

EXAMPLES.

The Peasant in the Palace.

A poor countryman, having met with a succession of misfortunes which reduced himself and his helpless family to hopeless destitution, was sorely perplexed to know where to apply for any relief. One day it occurred to him to call on a rich prince in a neighboring town, who was well known for his generosity. The poor man, leaving his wife and children weeping with cold

and hunger, set off on his journey. As he travelled along the road he grew uneasy as to the manner in which he should approach and address the prince. "What shall I say to this great man?" was the question ever presenting itself in the poor man's mind. At last he reached the palace, and went in; but the profuse magnificence of the grand halls, as he went on from one to another, completely dazed him, till at length he perceived a pretty little chapel to one side. Then he said to himself, "I will go no further: instead of appealing to an earthly prince I will call on the Blessed Lord, Who once, like me, had not whereon to lay His aching head. I have only to say His own plain words, as I learned them in the 'Our Father,' and He will be pleased with my petition." So, falling on his knees, he made known his woes to the Prince of princes, and then arose and went home with renewed feelings of confidence. When drawing near his poor cabin he was met by his children, who joyfully told him that a great prince from the city had sent them an abundance of provisions, clothing, fuel, and other necessaries. The truth was, the prince had heard of the poor countryman's misfortunes and subsequent destitution; had recognized him timidly approaching the palace, and seen him kneeling in the chapel, and had anticipated his wishes by sending relief to the family.

St. Louis, King of France.

St. Louis, King of France, always cherished great respect and affection for the place of his baptism. Often and often he would kneel down before the sacred baptismal font in the castle chapel at Poissy, where he had been baptized, and pass hours in thanksgiving to God for the favors bestowed upon him in that holy sacrament. Often, too, he used to sign his name to the most important documents simply as "Louis of Poissy," and without any symbol of his royal dignity. When asked by his courtiers why he went so often to the chapel at Poissy—why he preferred that unseemly, insignificant little chapel to the grand and stately cathedral at Rheims, in which he had been crowned king, he used to reply: "Have I not good reason for being more fond of the spot where I obtained the dignity of Christian than of the place where I received only the empty, fleeting honors of an earthly king? At Rheims I was decorated with the crown of my father, and anointed as an earthly ruler; but at Poissy I was adorned with the precious crown of Jesus Christ, and anointed as a child of God. By my coronation at Rheims I received the right only to rule over my subjects and to sit upon an earthly throne, whose power and splendor must leave me at my death; but at my baptism in Poissy, on the contrary, I received the right to sit upon a throne of everlasting glory in heaven."

St. Matilda.

This devout servant of God once asked Him what she should believe the most firmly concerning His unspeakable goodness. The Lord answered her: "My daughter! believe with confidence that I shall always receive you, as the loving father receives his favorite child. For surely, no father has ever given so bountifully and willingly his best gifts to a child as I do give My gifts, including even Myself, to you, and as I will continue to give. Whosoever hopes and believes thus in My goodness, and yields himself to Me with childlike love, shall be saved." And He further added: "I am pleased when I hear Myself called Father, and see men putting confidence in My fatherly goodness. In life I will stand by these like a Father, and after their death will reward them far beyond their merits."

We are all Brethren.

St. Rupert was born at Bingen on the Rhine, during the reign of Louis I. His father, Robolaus, was a heathen general, and bitterly opposed to the Christians. When Rupert was three years old, his Christian mother, Bertha, entered on a retired and strict method of life, with a view of devoting herself wholly to the careful bringing up of her only son. She placed over him the best tutors that the times could afford, while

she herself strove in every way to form his heart and soul according to the rules and requirements of religion. The youth responded nobly to the efforts of his mother; and when a mere boy, if he met on the street a child who was in want, he would take him by the hand, and, leading him to his mother, say to her: "See mother, here is your son." Bertha, gratified at her son's spirit of charity, would reply: "Yes, indeed, he is one of your brothers," and would then provide for the destitute child.

St. Aidan.

King Alwin made a present to this holy bishop of a very fine horse, with a costly bridle and saddle; for that zealous missionary in preaching the Gospel had often to make long journeys, in which he had to wade or swim across dangerous rivers, where a safe and true horse was often a matter of life or death to the rider. Not many days later, while the bishop was riding along a country-road, he was met by a poor man, who had lost everything he had in the world, and was in a sad state of destitution. St. Aidan, deeply moved at the poor man's piteous tale of woe, dismounted from his horse and gave it to him. When the king heard this he reproached the charitable bishop for his prodigality. The saint replied meekly, "I had nothing else to give. Do not reproach me for doing what everybody knows

your Majesty would do, in the goodness of your own heart ; for you understand as well as anybody that an animal is not to be compared to a poor human being, who is a child of God our Father."

Changing Fathers.

When St. Francis, directed by the light of divine grace, began to distribute his substance among the poor, he was summoned before the bishop, who ordered him to sign a paper renouncing his right to his father's estate, lest he should also give that away after the latter's death. Francis complied willingly, and then taking off his garments he laid them at his father's feet, saying : "Hitherto I have always during life called thee father. Henceforth I can say, with much more truth and satisfaction of mind, 'Our Father, Who art in heaven :' for in His hands I have deposited all my treasures; in Him are now placed all my hopes and expectations." Ever afterwards, his father continued to curse him. So Francis took a poor, despised old man, adopted him as his father in Christ ; fed, clothed, and sheltered him—on the one condition that he would bless St. Francis each time that he was cursed by his own unkind father.

Earthly and Heavenly Inheritance.

When St. Theodore was but fourteen years of age, he was one day shown, gathered together in

his father's house, the grand treasures to which he was the heir, and of which he would one day be the sole and undisputed owner. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: "What would it avail me, if all the world were mine, and God was not mine? My Father, and my treasures, are in the heavens above."

Exiled.

St. Chrysostom, the great patriarch and doctor of the Church, for his firm fidelity to principle, was sent into exile by the Empress Theodosia. When he heard his sentence, he remarked calmly: "I accept my sentence gladly; for wherever I go, heaven is ever above me, where dwelleth my Father, Who created me out of nothing, and Who will surely continue to be my Father, leading, guiding, feeding, clothing, and comforting me."

Consolation at the Grave.

Jane of Orvietto lost her loving father while she was still quite young. Her afflicted mother used to take her every Sunday and holy-day to her father's grave, where they would unite their prayers for the repose of the departed soul. One day her mother grieved more than usual, and complained that Providence had dealt harshly with her in taking away so soon the protector of her orphan girl. Jane, taking her mother's hand, said: "Mother, do you not know that we have still a

Father above—the heavenly Father, Who is loving and good? You know you taught me to say: 'Our Father Who art in heaven.'" These simple words of an innocent child made such a powerful impression on the mother's heart, that the poor woman dried her tears, looked up to heaven with joy, then upon her child, and at once resolved never again to murmur against the decrees of her heavenly Father. The future proved that Jane also had a Father in heaven, for under His care and blessing she grew to be a fair and fragrant flower in the garden of the Father's Church.

The First Petition in the Our Father.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

INSTRUCTION.

From the prelude to the Lord's Prayer we have seen that God is our Father and we are His children. From this it most naturally and necessarily follows that we should desire nothing more ardently than that our Father should be loved, praised, and honored by ourselves and by all men. Hence the first petition of the Our Father: "Hallowed be Thy name."

If what we pray for in this first petition is to be truly realized, we should not be satisfied with mere words, but should rather endeavor by our whole manner of life to labor for the glory of the divine

name, through the knowledge, love, and worship of God.

We can make God's name holy in ourselves:

1. If we render unceasing honor to God. If we have received favors from God, if He has endowed us with good talents, we should not take the credit to ourselves. If God has blessed us with prosperity, and we can do good, much good, for our neighbor, we should not be proud on that account. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us be praise and glory given, but to Thy own name.

2. When we glorify God's name by word and deed. This we do when we praise His holy name, and give it glory in our prayers, whether we be in adversity or prosperity, and when we do everything for that same honor and glory.

We can make God's name holy in others:

1. By edifying them through the example of a good life on our part. If the early Christians had not led such holy lives, there would be to-day few to say, "Hallowed be Thy name." The heroic virtues of those primitive Christians led many to embrace Christianity, and thus to sanctify and glorify God's name. If all Catholics were what their faith requires them to be, it would long ago have been evident to the world that the Catholic Church alone has the saving means of salvation and the power to apply them, and that without her pale are error and sin. Those who separated from her would long ago have returned to her

motherly bosom, and the great chasm of Christianity would have been closed.

2. By refraining from all sinfulness. Sin is a contempt for God; through it the Son of God is crucified over again.

3. By praying to God for the salvation of our fellow-men. Millions are even yet living in ignorance of God's name, and walking in the shadows of darkness. They too should be brought to sanctify God's name, by making them acquainted with the love of the heavenly Father. Hence every time we repeat the words, "Hallowed be Thy name," we should pray that they too may soon join us in the same prayer, and be one with us in proclaiming God's glory.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Holy and terrible is His name." (Ps. cx. 9.) "Kings of the earth, and all peoples: princes and all judges of the earth, young men and maidens: let the old with the younger praise the name of the Lord." (Ps. cxlviii. 11, 12.) "Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God." (1 Cor. x. 32.) "Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed." (2 Cor. vi. 3.) "We entreat you that you walk honestly towards them that are without." (1 Thess. iv. 11.) "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) "It is

He Who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." (Acts xvii. 25.) "In Him were all things created, all things were created by Him and in Him: and He is before all, and by Him all things consist." (Colos. i. 16.) "The servant of the Lord must be mild towards all men, with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth, if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil." (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) "We beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men." (1 Thess. v. 14.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we say 'Hallowed be Thy name,' we do not mean to pray as if God's name were not already holy, but that it may become so among men, and that God may make it so known among them, they may believe there is nothing more holy among men, and which they ought to be afraid to offend, for it is just to sanctify God's name, to fear Him of Whom it is said, His name is Lord." (St. Augustine.) "'Hallowed be Thy name.' What means hallowed? It is as if we wished Him to be glorified Who said: 'Be holy, because I am holy;' as if from our praising and honoring Him there came sanctification. 'The name of God is holy by its very nature, whether we call it so or not. But as it is desecrated by

those who sin, according to the saying of Isaias the prophet' (lii. 5), 'My name is continually blasphemed all day long' among the heathens, we therefore pray that the same name of God may be hallowed or sanctified in us, not indeed as being previously unhallowed, but that it be hallowed in us, by ourselves." (St. Cyril.)

"Generally we should not pray for anything, till we have prayed for the glory of God, for God is unquestionably a greater good than all other creatures combined. Hence we should first be most zealous for His honor, after the example of Christ, Who in all His doings sought only the glory of His Father. 'Father,' prayed He, 'I have revealed Thy name to men.'" (St. Chrysostom.)

EXAMPLES.

St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Among the many saints in the Church who made the glorifying of God's name the labor of their lives St. Ignatius takes a foremost place. His well-known motto was: "To the honor and glory of God." In the early part of his life he was more or less devoted to the ways of the world, but being prostrated on a bed of pain, his soul was enlightened by divine grace, and he resolved, if he lived, to devote himself to the honor and glory of his heavenly Father. He made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Montserrat, prayed and fasted much, and went to Jerusalem, there to do

honor to the name of the Father Who gave us His only Son to suffer and die for our sake. On his way out and home he lost no opportunity to deter the sailors and others from dishonoring the holy names of God and Jesus. When he was derided and persecuted, he would say softly to himself: "For the honor and glory of God." All aglow with zeal for the promotion of God's honor and glory, he would gather the children from the streets and teach them the Christian doctrine, and especially to love and venerate the name of God.

In his zeal and piety he gathered about him in Paris nine other young men, in union with whom he laid the foundation, so to speak, of the great Society of Jesus, the chief purpose of which always has been to contribute to the glorifying of God's Holy Name. And how many souls have been gained to Christ through this company of St. Ignatius! How many in the remotest corners of the earth first learned to utter the Holy Name of Jesus through the zealous efforts of His self-sacrificing sons! Millions were converted to the knowledge of the one true God, and taught to say, from their simple hearts: "Hallowed be Thy name."

So enthusiastic was St. Ignatius for the honor of the Holy Name, that he often used to say: "If the choice were given me, either to dwell longer on earth, and labor and suffer for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, or to go at once

into the kingdom of heaven, I would choose the first."

To God the Lord be Praise and Honor.

When Mary was greeted with words of high praise by the angel, she styled herself simply, "the handmaid of the Lord." When saluted by St. Elizabeth, the same virgin only sang the praises of the Lord in the inspired Magnificat.

When Peter and John cured the lame man at the gate of the Temple, and drew upon themselves the admiring praises of the multitude, Peter took good care to explain that the miracle had been effected, not by virtue of their power, but by faith in the name of Jesus, Who was crucified and rose from the dead, the same Messias foretold by the prophets.

Notwithstanding his brilliant talents, St. Augustine was never proud, but attributed all his advantages to the grace of God. Indeed, he would consider it an injustice to God to think otherwise. Hence he used to say: "All things bright and fair are Thine, O Lord. Thine is the glory. Whosoever, therefore, seeks his own honor in Thy works is a robber and a thief, for he robs Thee of the glory, Who art his Lord and Master."

One day when King Canute was walking near the sea-shore one of his attendants said to him: "Who, O king, is greater than thou? Millions of men obey thee. Thou canst command the very

ocean, and it will obey thee." The king, amused rather than indignant at the silly flatterer, had his chair placed on the beach, and with mock solemnity said: "I order thee, thou ocean, not to approach thy master." Just then a large wave broke at the king's feet, and he said, laughing: "Behold! what great authority I have over the sea! How it disregards my orders! The only Lord and Master of heaven and earth is the God Who made them. To Him be all honor and glory."

The same King Canute placed his royal crown on the head of the figure of Our Lord in the cathedral at Winchester, and repeated in touching tones the words of the 88th Psalm:

"O Lord God of Hosts, who is like to Thee? Thou art mighty, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee. Thou rulest the power of the sea, and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof."

St. Francis at one time dwelt in the same convent at Portiuncula with Brother Massaeus, a man of great sanctity, profound wisdom, and great ability to discourse about God. The saint was very much attached to him. One day Brother Massaeus met Francis returning from the woods, where he had been praying, and, wishing to try the saint's humility, said to him curtly and sharply: "Why do people make so much ado about you? You have no personal presence, you don't know much, you are not of noble birth. Why do they crowd

around to hear you and follow your directions?" The saint was glad in his heart when he heard these remarks, and raising his eyes to heaven remained absorbed in thoughts on God. Then, kneeling down and thanking God aloud, he turned and said to Brother Massaeus: "You wish to know why people flock about me? I owe it all to God, Who sees good and bad people in all places, and as His eyes light on no sinner greater than I am myself, He selects me to effect a purpose, and to make the purpose miraculous chooses a sinner. He wishes to shame the nobility, beauty, skill, learning, and eloquence of the world. He wishes also that people should know that all virtues belong to God, and not to the creature; that in His presence no creature should take credit to himself, but give all credit to the Lord." After listening to these words, Massaeus really felt that Francis was well grounded in humility.

When the famous musical composition of "The Creation" was performed for the first time in public the whole world resounded with the praises of Haydn, its author. But he simply pointed heavenwards and said, "Nothing comes from me; all is from above."

God Praised at a Death-bed.

St. Joseph Oriolo, a Spanish priest, who all through a long life had toiled assiduously for the salvation of souls, feeling his end approaching,

entered the house of a poor acquaintance and said, "My friend, let me have a place to lie down, for I shall soon die." Then, lying down on a bed, he became much worse. The inmates of the house and many neighbors wept to see their beloved friend so sick. But he said: "My good friends, be cheerful; have courage. God will soon take me to Himself, and then I shall sing hymns in His honor and praise His holy name for all eternity." Then he sent for four choir singers, who began to sing to the accompaniment of a harp. St. Joseph joined in the chant of praise with a feeble but pleasant voice, his eyes fastened on his crucifix, and his heart fixed on God. While singing he breathed forth his soul to God.

St. Polycarp.

When the holy Bishop Polycarp, amid the threats of his persecutors, was urged to blaspheme the name of God, he said, calmly: "I have served the one true God for six-and-eighty years, and have received endless blessings from His hands. How can you ask me to blaspheme Him Who redeemed me? I will praise His name and proclaim His glory. I cannot offend my Lord and Master." Willingly he surrendered his aged body into the hands of his executioners. God glorified His venerable servant even in death, for the flames refused even to singe him. The sword had to be used to effect his death.

A Peculiar Mode of Good Example.

St. Francis once said to a brother, "Come, let us go out and preach to the people." After traversing several streets in silence they returned to the monastery. The wondering brother remarked, "Father Francis, what about the sermon you were to preach?" The saint replied, "The sermon is over."

Thus the saint believed that a pious and recollected demeanor, a good example, an appearance of true humility, contribute as much to the glory of God and the salvation of souls as an eloquent sermon.

St. Jerome and the Blasphemer.

A miserable, abandoned man had the boldness to blaspheme God's name in the presence of St. Jerome. The latter, deeply indignant, rebuked him sternly, saying: "The very dogs bark for their master, and you do not wish me to speak the truth of Christ. Why should I be silent when God's name is dishonored? God forbid I should. I can die, but I cannot be silent."

A Brave Host.

Once when a number of persons in a tavern were using profane language, each one trying to outdo the other in dishonoring the name of God, the landlord took down the crucifix from its place on the wall, and was about to carry it from the

room. The guests halted in their conversation, while one asked the landlord why he was taking away the crucifix. He answered sternly and curtly: "It is not becoming for the sacred image to hear your talk." The guests were touched to the heart, and quietly emptying their glasses departed.

Zeal for the Conversion of Sinners.

An acquaintance of St. Ignatius Loyola kept up an improper intercourse with a woman who lived in the country outside of Paris. The saint, after much fruitless advice to the young man, walked out one evening on the same road, and stood near the edge of a half-frozen pond. When he saw his acquaintance coming he plunged up to his neck in the water, and said: "Go and satisfy your lust. Meanwhile I will suffer here for your sin, in order to hold back from you the avenging hand of God, that is ready to strike you." The sinful man became ashamed of his conduct, and returned home penitent.

St. Francis Assisi once met a young man who was leading an irregular life. Spreading his mantle on the road he bowed profoundly before the young man. When asked why he did that, Francis replied, "This man whom I took for a sinner will one day be a great saint." The young man, touched by the saint's words and humility, entered seriously into himself, and began to lead a devout, penitential life.

Edmund Campion.

Among the many servants of God who sacrificed their all to glorify the name of God among heretics and unbelievers, Edmund Campion, an Englishman, stands pre-eminent. When unjustly condemned to death for alleged treason, he returned thanks to God by repeating the Te Deum, a hymn in which the name of the Lord is praised over and over again. When standing on the scaffold, before the eyes of assembled London, he said: "We are here to-day, a spectacle to men and angels. Here I am to die as a traitor. But Thou, O Lord, knowest my innocence. Thou knowest that I had no other wish but Thy glory and England's welfare. The day will come when all shall be made manifest, even the most hidden things." Then he prayed for his persecutors, and said: "I have always prayed to God, and do now pray, that my death, which I accept willingly, may be an atoning sacrifice for your sins, to bring you faith and eternal happiness, that you may hereafter sanctify and glorify the name of God, as I even now wish to sanctify and glorify it, even by the last drop of my blood."

The Second Petition in the Our Father.

"THY KINGDOM COME."

INSTRUCTION.

THE kingdom of God may be described as threefold; namely, His kingdom in its outward and

visible form, which is the Church; secondly, His kingdom among men, in which He rules their souls; and finally, His kingdom full and complete in heaven.

Hence when we say, "Thy kingdom come," we pray:

1. For the growth of the holy Catholic Church, and the destruction of the devil's dominion on earth; begging at the same time that the unbelievers and Jews may be brought to faith in Christ and a knowledge of the one true God, and that heretics and schismatics may also return to the one fold and the one shepherd.

2. For the establishment of God within us, asking that God would destroy the reign of sin in our hearts, expel all unholy desires, all sinful words, and all works of darkness, and that by virtue of His grace He would reign in our hearts in piety and all good works, so that we could say with the apostle Paul, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) It is not I who govern my heart, but Christ. He rules with His divine grace in my interior life. "For the kingdom of God is justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

3. For the securing of God's heavenly kingdom, our own true home, since we are here below but pilgrims journeying towards our fatherland.

As children of God, we rightly pray first of all for the sanctifying of God's name. But as this can

be best accomplished in the Church through pious hearts penetrated with His grace, and by the saints and elect, we pray at the same time, "Thy kingdom come." In truth, the second petition of the Our Father is inseparably associated with the first.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." (Matt. xi. 12.) "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi. 43.) "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 62.) "The unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9.) "Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. xv. 50.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we pray that our kingdom may come, which was promised to us by Christ and purchased by His suffering and death, that thus we, who have heretofore ruled in the world may afterwards rule under the dominion of Christ." (St. Cyprian.) "The whole earth is a house of God, founded through faith, erected through confidence and completed through

charity. Let then the living stones be drawn together and joined together in the temple structure for God." (St. Augustine.) "The kingdom of God comes to you when you have sought its graces." (St. Ambrose.) "The second petition of a pure mind is the wish that the kingdom of his Father may come, that, namely, in which Christ the Lord reigns with His saints forever and ever. This takes place when the dominion of the devil is broken in our hearts by the extermination of vice, when God secures the upper hand within us because we are more zealous for virtue, when tepidity is overcome, unrest removed, pride cast down, and chastity, humility, and peace prevail in our souls." (Cassian.) "It is an act of boldness to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and not to fear its coming." (St. Jerome.)

EXAMPLES.

Institutions for the Spread of the Gospel.

The Church not only teaches her children to say the Our Father, but she also encourages them to employ their means in having it reduced to practice, giving them opportunities to assist in extending the kingdom of God.

After the death of their blessed Master, the apostles went forth into all the world to preach the lessons of the cross, and wherever they founded churches they also encouraged devout and God-

fearing persons, who in their turn went forth to teach, to make their heathen brethren sharers in their blessings. Thus were our ancestors taught Christianity, for every land had its apostles.

The popes especially have in all ages effected much, often with their own private means. They have sent messengers of the Faith into all parts of the world, and sustained them by every means in their power. The different orders established by the Church, such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, Lazarists, Dominicans, and other associations, have sent out many of their brethren. These noble champions of Christ have not only endured untold sufferings, battling against the elements, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, the violent opposition of people, but they have suffered dreadful tortures, and sacrificed their lives, like the first Christians.

In the year 1622 Pope Gregory XV. gave firm basis to the system of foreign missions. In order to establish unity of action he founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) at Rome. Pope Urban VIII. bestowed upon it a seminary for the training and educating of missionaries of all nationalities. This College of Propaganda he placed under the direction of the same congregation, began a library and a printing department in all languages, and gave out of his own means enough to maintain all. At the same time he established free scholarships for pupils of all countries, who were afterwards to

return as missionaries to their fatherland. Every year, on the feast of the Epiphany, this college holds what is called the Language Festival, at which students from different countries make addresses in their respective tongues; thus showing forth the universality or catholicity of God's Church.

Under the loving care of the Church devoted missionaries travel to all parts of the world, where they are to give themselves up to the propagation of our holy faith and its salutary teachings. As they must consecrate themselves entirely to their vocation, they depend for their support on the benevolence of their brethren at home. Nor are the necessaries of life alone sufficient for them: they have to build schools and churches, furnish teachers for the instruction of the young, and often deny themselves every comfort in order to help others. There is a vast field for apostolic work, for the vineyard is large and the laborers are few, and the missionary who does not meet a martyr's death generally succumbs to the burden of work and privations.

There are still five hundred millions of pagans to be converted. In a country as large as Germany there are frequently only two or three missionaries, and their districts cover from a hundred and fifty to two hundred miles. It is heartrending to read of the misery of these men, who have left their families, homes, and positions to preach

the Gospel to the heathens, and who are frequently prevented from doing the good they might do through want of means to carry on their work. A missionary of the Society of Jesus, who with three brethren went to the Lebanon in the hope of strengthening and sustaining in their faith the Catholics there, whom the Mohammedans are constantly trying by threats and violence to force into their faith, in a letter in which he asks for help, writes:

"We are now four missionaries on the highway, without a roof, almost without clothes and food. We live like the vagrant Arabs. A stick scooped out at one end serves as a spoon; I drink from a piece of skin; one earthern vessel is my sole cooking utensil; and a little rice and bread is my food day in and day out, except at such times when the bread and rice are wanting. As to wine, I believe a glass of wine would affect me now, I am so used to water. From this you can imagine the rest.

"My brother, P. Planchet, does much good in the desert plains at Balbek; the reports of the caravans coming from there sometimes border on the marvellous. The poor man, however, is frequently destitute of the necessities of life, in spite of all his exertions. He is building himself a house now, helping in the work himself, and cheering the others by his example; and he is all alone in this forlorn, impoverished country, living with the Bedouins, like one of them. In the enormous

district between Al Maalaka and Bkaa he is the only physician; all come to him for help—Christians, Bedouins, infidels, and wandering Arabs. But in order to help these people medicine is indispensable, and of this there is seldom any on hand.

"I beg you to render us some assistance. I only ask that you send us out of your sacristy and wardrobe what you can no longer use. What is waste and cast-off with you will be a treasure here. A ball of yarn, a card of buttons, and a few needles will prove very acceptable, as we have to go for months sometimes in torn garments, for want of thread and needle with which to repair them."

This is the tone of most of the reports of these messengers of the Lord. Now we can all share in the fruits of the holy mission by assisting the noble men who are devoted to this work. This is not only a work full of blessings, yielding ample fruit, but it is also our duty; we give only a trifle of what we have received, and return thanks to God for the light of truth, which in His mercy He sheds upon us. It would be a shame for any Christian so situated that he can help, to allow the missionaries to starve for want of the little he can contribute. It will be of little avail to pray if we are not willing to make some sacrifice.

To receive the contributions of Christians for their poor brethren, the heathens, several associations have been instituted, of which we will mention only three.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.—This organization was founded in 1726 by the French bishops, and, thanks to the Lord, has spread to all Christian countries. Its purpose is to collect contributions for the missionaries, and to distribute them where most needed. The society has two executive branches—one located in Paris and the other at Lyons. Members pay an annual fee of about fifty cents, which money is collected from each ten members by one of them, who delivers it to another, and he collects from ten such groups of ten. They help the missionaries further by saying the Lord's Prayer once a day in honor of St. Francis Xavier, the patron-saint of missionaries. This association works a great deal of good, and through it the unity of the Church and active Christian charity bring forth the best fruit. But there are several hundred mission-stations to support, with their priests, teachers, nurses, catechists, churches, seminaries, etc.; and there remains much to be wished for, although all that is required could be easily furnished if all who are able would share in the work. It is sad to note that only about one in a hundred helps in this work.

The Association of the Holy Childhood.—Among the many horrors of paganism one of the most infamous is that, among many nations, a father is free to choose whether the children that are born to him shall live or not. Thus every year many

thousands of children are killed, because they are weak or deformed, or because the parents are unable or unwilling to support them. Especially is this the case in China, where thousands of children are either drowned or thrown into the streets, where they are devoured by dogs and hogs, crushed to death under horses' hoofs, or thrown into a cart and buried. In the city of Peking alone three thousand children are thus disposed of annually. Large children are sold by their own parents, and carried into strange lands as slaves. No one takes pity on them; they perish miserably, and are lost to heaven for want of baptism.

But for these children, too, God has provided, if only men will lend their aid. This crying evil touched the tender heart of the noble Bishop Forbin-Janson, of Nancy, and he did everything in his power to put a stop to it, by buying these children from their unnatural parents, baptizing them, nursing them till they died, or, if they survived, by educating them. Thus the Association of the Holy Childhood was established. The good bishop addressed himself especially to the hearts of children, appealing to them to give part of their little savings for their poor brothers and sisters.

This association is in no way connected with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. It is intended primarily for children, and the annual contribution is about fifty cents. Of course grown persons may also share in this work, but the

founder of the association has made it an express condition that no adult may contribute who is not a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in order that the latter institution may not suffer any loss.

The Association of the Holy Childhood saves thousands of souls for heaven, for a child may be bought for a few dollars. We can understand, however, that the nursing and education of the children entail considerable expense. Christian parents thus have a grand opportunity of planting in the hearts of their children the seeds of compassion and sympathy, by encouraging them to take part in this good work.

St. Boniface Society.—It may seem incredible, but it is none the less true, that in happy Germany there are Catholics who are being lost to the Church for want of instruction, and others are longing for the holy sacraments, but are unable to obtain them, because of their great distance from church and priest. In Northern Germany there are many Catholics living among Protestants, and there is often no priest within miles of them, and this in districts where Catholic churches still exist erected by Catholic piety for the service of the most holy sacrifice. It often happens, too, that one Catholic must teach the Faith to others, and they see a priest only once or twice a year when he comes on his visit, and many a time he is not even allowed to celebrate holy Mass.

In 1851 a noble-minded man, Count Joseph of Stolberg, from Westphalia, moved by the sad condition of the Church in Northern Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, the free cities, Schleswig, Holstein, Lauenburg, etc., formed a society to support the Church where there is a priest, and to found new stations and schools. He put the society under the patronage of St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, in whose honor the members daily say the Lord's Prayer. The annual contribution is voluntary. With the blessing of God and the help of this society the light of the faith will again shine on these people.

The members of these societies can earn many indulgences. The zeal of Catholics can always find an opportunity to work for the extension of God's kingdom on earth, and should seek one if it does not offer itself. If no other channel can be found, offerings may be given to one's pastor. Greater efforts must be made if we would prove ourselves worthy of favors and graces received. It is calculated that the Catholics of Europe apply two million dollars annually to the propagation of the faith. But in England alone four million dollars annually go to the Protestant missions, and a million Bibles and a couple of millions of tracts are distributed. Notwithstanding this the Protestant missions have no success, for the well-paid married missionaries remain at the coast, under the protection of the war-ships of their nation, and go

into trade instead of preaching, and return home rich, while the poor Catholic missionary who sacrifices health and life wins thousands of souls. Catholics should blush at this when they consider what the Church might do for the kingdom of God if the zeal of the members were more active.

The Apostle says: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. x. 15.) How pleasing then must be the hands of those who support these evangelists and messengers of peace.

From the Life of St. Francis Xavier.

Among the countless missionaries of God's Church we shall mention but one—the devoted St. Francis Xavier. He was born in Spain in the year 1506. Soon after joining St. Ignatius he was sent to preach the Gospel in the East Indies. Even on shipboard he instructed the sailors daily in their duty to God, and preached twice every Sunday. On reaching Goa he revived a religious spirit among the European settlers, and then entered on his work among the pagans, of whom he baptized over 200,000 with his own hand. After ten years of the most disinterested missionary labors, he died at his work in the year 1552.

Alfonso of Aragon.

The pious and wise Alfonso of Aragon was accustomed to offer his special thanks to God for

the following benefits: First, because He had created him a reasonable being; secondly, because He had allowed him to grow up in the bosom of the Catholic Church; and, thirdly, because He had given him such great power on earth, and thereby an opportunity to contribute by word and deed to the extension of the heavenly kingdom on earth. And under this pious king the Catholic Church reached its richest development throughout his wide kingdom.

The Offering of a Poor Negro.

Years ago, among those whom a missionary in Berbice called up in order to learn how much each was willing to give toward the erection of a new house of God, was a poor negro. "Here I am," he exclaimed; and full of zeal he limped on his wooden leg to the table. Putting his hand in his pocket he took out some silver, and with amiable impetuosity he said: "Here is my contribution, sir." When the missionary told him to keep his money and he would call for it later, the negro replied: "Why, my dear sir, God's work must be done; why, I might die." And with this he brought out some more silver, and said: "This is for my wife, sir;" and from another pocket he brought a third package, saying: "And this is for my child, sir." Altogether he gave about twenty dollars.

The Kingdom of God Within Us.

Thomas of Jesu used to pray with great fervor that the kingdom of God might enter his heart. This prayer was as follows: "Enter our hearts, kindest Father! rule therein, O supreme Master, and dwell therein. If my soul may be so happy as to become Thy kingdom here on earth, then am I willing that Thou shouldst postpone for me the possession of the heavenly kingdom as long as it may please Thee; for neither in heaven nor on earth do I wish for aught but Thee, and if Thou wilt only rule within me with perfect power, all my desires are granted."

In similar manner Louis of Granada used to pray. "Behold, O Lord," he cried, "how many kings or rather tyrants wish to rule us! The devil with his malice, the world with its splendor, the flesh with its lusts, and selfishness with its greed. Tyrants they are, doing violence to Thy kingdom, endeavoring to destroy Thy power, and importuning us to do their will. Rise then, O heavenly King! attack this pernicious tyranny, restore order, and no longer permit such iniquity in Thy kingdom. Drive out the tyrants, destroy Thine enemies, that those who hate Thee shall flee! Command me, my Sovereign! Thou alone shalt reign, and to Thy throne only let us bow! Thou alone shalt dwell in my heart, with Thy kingdom alone be my soul occupied. Grant, O

God, that in future I may think of nothing and seek nothing but Thy kingdom alone."

The Happy Beggar.

Blessed are we when God has entered our heart and dwells therein! We shall want nothing on earth.

On one occasion a gentleman while out hunting heard some one singing at a distance, and following the sound he came upon a poor leper. To the question whether it was he who had sung so merrily and cheerfully, he replied that it was, and when the gentleman asked how he could be contented and sing while in such pain and suffering so many privations, he answered: "Well, you see, my dear sir, with all my physical distress and with all my outward sufferings, I can still be of good cheer, because I carry God in my heart. The more, therefore, my body, this miserable wall of clay, crumbles to pieces, the nearer I am brought to Him, and for joy of this I sing so merrily."

Missions.

The Church sends preachers of the faith even to those of her children who have their own pastor and from their youth are brought up in the true faith. Among these, too, she wishes to spread the kingdom of God, that is to say, she wishes to impress the faith deeper on their hearts, to give new life to their faith, to destroy vice and all bad habits.

These preachers of the faith work together with the pastor in the so-called *popular missions* for the great work of conversion and salvation of souls.

These popular missions have existed in the Church at all times. As often as necessary, God awakens as His chosen knights those who, like the prophets of old, go forth and with powerful voice announce punishment and judgment to hardened sinners, mercy and peace to those who are converted. Around these the multitude crowd to profit by their doctrines and example. They preach nothing new or different, but they speak like one who has power from on high. Frequently these men lived in deserts and waste places, without ever leaving them; but the people flocked there from far and near, asking them to preach to them and to teach them. Such men, like St. Antony the hermit, Simeon Stylites, etc., were the pillars of the Catholic Church in times when she was in great danger from heresies.

In the Middle Ages God awakened *itinerant preachers*, who travelled over whole countries, and shook up continents, strengthening the faith and freeing thousands from the bonds of sin. Such men were St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Antony of Padua, St. Vincent Ferrer, John Capistran, Berthold of Ratisbon, etc. These always attracted great multitudes, preaching as a rule under the open sky, because no church was large enough to hold their followers.

The Fathers of St. Francis and St. Dominic had great influence over the people by their sermons, and lent powerful assistance to the pastors. Other religious communities were erected to lighten the burden of the secular priests. Thus, St. Cajetan founded the Order of the Theatines, about 1524; St. Philip Neri the Oratorians, about 1564; the Blessed John Leonardi the Marianites, 1574; St. Francis Caracciolo the Minor Clerics, 1588; Charles Caraffa the Pious Laborers, 1620. All these join with the secular priests in furthering the kingdom of God among Christians, that the baptized may be Christians in deed as well as in name.

St. Vincent of Paul, the founder of the Lazarists, about 1624; St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, about 1540; and St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists), about 1732, more than others learned from painful experience how sin and ignorance had grown among the people, and they and their brethren spared no pains to influence the people through sermons and instruction. They introduced spiritual exercises, which to this day are carried on under the name of Popular Missions, principally by their spiritual sons, and work an extraordinary amount of blessings. But for this very reason they are attacked by many. They are accused of many things which we shall

not speak of here, because we wish to state only their usefulness.

1. The popular missions are spiritual exercises. Exercise in spiritual things (meditation, the word of God, sacraments, etc.) is necessary for every Christian. It must be of great advantage, therefore, to practise it for a few days continuously under the guidance of an experienced guide of souls.

2. A large part of mankind is in the sleep of sin, and must be frightened out of it. But this cannot be done by impressions to which they are accustomed. To be brought to their senses they must be shaken up in an extraordinary way.

3. Good example is a powerful factor in conversion. A sinner who, touched by the mercy of God, has recognized his misery and is willing to reform, frequently has no one to understand his changed condition, and everyone seems to take pains to turn him from his good resolutions. In a mission the zeal of many is aroused, and the good example of one is a support to the others.

4. Many sins are confessed that for years were concealed, and many unworthy confessions are made good ones. False pride is more easily put aside in the confessional, for the excitement is greater, and it is easier to confess to a strange priest, well-known for his zeal and piety. It not infrequently occurs that parishioners hide sins from their own pastors because they are ashamed before them, and fear to lose their respect.

5. Ignorance in matters of salvation is greater than one thinks, and not only among the lowly, but also among the educated. Of course we know what the catechism teaches, but we do not comply with these teachings, because the will is wanting. In a holy mission instruction is given more fully, and the shortcomings of the soul are shown as in a mirror; we see our faults in the family, in the education of our children, in our relations to our neighbors, as we never saw them before.

1. Some may think that the holding of a mission is a reproach to a congregation and a reflection on its piety. They should bear in mind, however, that in the best congregation, as in others, there are young people. All young people, without exception, stand in need of earnest exhortation, and are apt to be careless in confession, not by concealing anything, but in a superficial examination of conscience, by being wanting in a firm purpose of amendment and in contrition, by which their confessions are as unworthy as if they had concealed their sins. Therefore, for the sake of the young people alone, if for no other reason, a mission is needed even in the best congregation.

2. A mission is a renewal of spirit useful to everyone; for the soul, too, requires to refresh itself. Everyone should devote a few days each year to the salvation of his soul, undisturbed by human affairs.

3. Even the most God-fearing man is not per-

fect. Most people are guilty of carelessness and want of attention at divine service, in prayer, etc. It is well, therefore, that they should do a little more a few days in the year, and thereby make some amendment.

4. Much praying is done during a mission. This brings down upon us the blessing of God, and for this we pray.

5. Seed sown on good soil bears rich fruit; sown on rock, it perishes. A good congregation is the best soil for a holy mission. We all are sinners, weak and full of faults; but all have not good-will. Now, why should a congregation that can truthfully say, "The soil is here," object to having the seed sown?

Whoever, then, earnestly wishes that the kingdom of God be implanted in the hearts of the faithful will find a mighty helper in popular missions.

Homesickness.

A distinguishing characteristic of the saints of God is their extraordinary longing for heaven. All their entreaties and prayers are one continuous petition for possession of heavenly bliss.

Louis of Granada exclaims: "Happy mansion of glory, the desires of my heart are directed to thee; thy infinite beauties constitute the delight of my soul; the more I consider thee, the more I languish with love for thee. Sole object of my

ardent desires I am charmed with the sweet remembrance of thee. How happy my soul, and eternally happy, O heavenly city, should it merit to contemplate thy glory, thy beauty, thy happiness; to see thy gates, thy walls, thy streets, thy numerous buildings, thy illustrious inhabitants, and thy Almighty Sovereign enthroned in splendor and majesty in the midst of thee! For thy walls are of precious stones, thy gates are of beauteous pearl, and thy streets are of the purest gold, ever resounding with joyful *Alleluias*. Thy many mansions are founded upon hewn, square, sapphire stone, and covered in with plates of gold. There are the harmonious choirs of angels; there the assemblage of the heavenly citizens; there the joyful procession of all those blessed souls who from the melancholy pilgrimage of this life return to the never-ending joys of their heavenly country." And the pious author of the *Following of Christ* sighs: "O thou most blessed dwelling of the celestial city! O shining day of eternity, darkened by no night! Oh, would that day had come, and the end of all that is temporal! Oh, when are these evils to cease? When am I, O Lord, to think of Thee alone, in perfect joy? Lord, comfort me in my misery, soften my pain! All that this world can offer for consolation is only a burden to me. Ah! when am I to stand before Thee and gaze upon Thee? when look upon the glories of Thy kingdom? When wilt Thou be

all in all to me? When am I to come to Thee into Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved ones from eternity?"

The Unequal Division.

When St. Bernard, that great servant of God, was going into solitude, he met his little brother, Nivard by name, who was playing with his comrades. In passing he called to him: "Farewell, Nivard! I leave to you all my paternal treasures and possessions, as I am about to enter an Order, to seek there the kingdom of God, which is heaven." "What?" replied the little boy, "what? The treasures of heaven are to be for you and those of the earth for me? This division is unequal: I prefer to share heaven with you." And he followed him at once.

The Third Petition in the Our Father.

"THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

INSTRUCTION.

In the second petition of the Our Father we pray to God that His kingdom may come. It will come to us in reality and truth if we at all times do God's will cheerfully and exactly. The Lord Himself says: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father." (Matt. vii. 21.) Hence in the third petition of the

Lord's Prayer we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Now we do God's will—

1. When with loyal fidelity and a holy promptness, such as we see among the inhabitants of heaven, we comply with God's precepts and counsels.

2. When we submit patiently and quietly to all the trials sent to us by God, and are content with the condition of life in which He has placed us: not murmuring when God sends us sickness, disappointment, or losses of temporal goods; not petulantly asking why God has done this to us.

Thus we ask in this third petition of the Lord's Prayer—

1. The grace to be enabled to keep God's commandments and those of His holy Church, and to comply with all other duties temporal and spiritual. This we do because our will from our very youth up is inclined to evil and prone to yield to temptation.

2. The grace to say in all our troubles of life, "Not my will, but Thine be done, O Lord," and to do violence to our own will, as Christ did in the Garden of Olives.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it: What art thou making?" (Is. xlv. 9.) "Shall

there be evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done?" (Amos iii. 6.) "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.) "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.)

"Epaphras is always solicitous for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and full in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.) "Become not unwise: but understand what is the will of God." (Eph. v. 17.) "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called. Wast thou called, being a bondman? care not for it." (1 Cor. vii. 21.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"The private soldier does not mark out the line of march, nor go whithersoever he listeth, nor station himself wheresoever he pleases. God forbid! He accepts the directions from his general and obeys them promptly and exactly. If he act against orders or change the line of march, he receives punishment instead of reward, and nowhere finds a permanent place. So, too, must we go the way and receive the positions which God has assigned to us. We must willingly submit to the divine precepts and commands, that is, fulfil exactly the holy will of God. Thus will take place that for which we pray, when we say 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'" (St. Ambrose.)

"When we say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' we do not ask God to do His own will, but rather that we should be in a condition to do what He wills. The will of God is that which Christ Himself practised and preached, namely, humility in conduct, constancy in faith, righteousness in action, charity in works, strictness in morals; to do no wrong; to love God with our whole hearts, to love Him because He is our Father, to fear Him because He is God; to prefer nothing before Christ as He preferred nothing before us; to cling to Him with an undying love, to clasp His cross with firm and loving hands when there is question of defending His honor and name; to be bold in professing the faith; in time of trial to feel confident of victory, and so advance to the combat; showing patience in death, by which we are crowned: this is what is called a co-heir of Christ; this is called obeying God's commands; this is called doing our Father's will." (St. Cyprian.) "The Lord wishes that as long as we live here on earth we should hold intercourse with the inhabitants of heaven; and He also wishes that before it becomes our privilege to enter heaven, we should make earth a heaven." (St. Chrysostom.) "Do not pray that what thou wilt be done, but pray rather as thou wast taught to pray, that God's will be done in thee." (Nilus.) "What does God hate, or what does He punish besides self-will? Self-will should cease, and hell would cease,

for against what else could the fires rage but against self-will?" (St. Bernard.)

EXAMPLES.

Faithful Performers of God's Will.

From Holy Scripture.—The examples of this virtue to be found in Holy Writ are too well known to need recounting here. Abraham, who was ready to slaughter his only son, and without a murmur, although he was his only hope as the progenitor of the promised generations; Job, whose patience is proverbial; the Saviour Himself, who drank the chalice of suffering to its very dregs; Mary, who never lost faith or hope, even under the cross—these are all admirable examples of obedience to the divine will.

Another example, and one that ought to make Christians ashamed, is given us by King David. He was compelled to flee before his own son Absalom. Although he had the sympathy of most of his subjects, and even of the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant out of Jerusalem, he said to the priest Sadoc: "Bring back the ark to the city. If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, He will lead me back, and let me see it and the tabernacle. But if He say to me: Thou pleasest Me not, I am ready. Let Him do to me what seems good to Him."

From the History of the Saints.—Blessed Henry

of Suso fulfilled day and night with tender conscientiousness the will of his heavenly Father. He found it easy to keep the commandments of God, even in the smallest matters. Hence he used to say often: "God does not require us to abound in knowledge of heavenly things; but He desires us to do His will in all things, and to subject ourselves to that divine will."

Every time that St. Catherine of Siena said the Our Father she laid special stress on the words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Not infrequently she would inquire of herself: "How do I stand? Is God's will always obeyed by me?" By such and other questions she acquired new courage to obey the will of God.

One day St. Stephana in spirit saw herself placed in heaven, where she saw mingling among the seraphim many deceased persons whom she had formerly known on earth, and heard a voice assuring her that the souls had attained that high degree of glory because when on earth they had not only prayed "Thy will be done," but because they had truly made it their food ever to do the will of the Lord.

It was a most pleasing and sacred task to that devout servant of God, Louis of Granada, to do God's will, and he prayed unceasingly to that effect. "Only this one thing, O Lord," he used often to say, "only this one thing do I seek—that

Thy holy will be done perfectly, that I be all Thine, and ever give myself to Thy holy service. I will ask nothing contrary to Thy will; I will do nothing against that will, even to please friends and acquaintances or gratify flesh and blood. Thy holy will is my only joy, and the delight and consolation of my soul."

A Wise Choice.

While Francis Borgia was Duke of Gandia his wife was grievously sick, and God permitted him to choose between her death and her restoration to health. With sad but submissive heart Francis said: "Lord, I have nothing to say. Both in regard to my wife and my children I wish Thy holy will be done."

Prayer of Submission.

The noble and devout Elizabeth, sister to King Louis XVI., who died on the guillotine in Paris, used to say in her prison cell the following prayer: "O my God, I know not what is to befall me. But I know that nothing can be done to me except by Thy holy will, and that consoles me. I adore Thy sacred decrees, and submit myself to them with all my soul. I will whatever Thou willest, accept whatever comes from Thy blessed hands, offer everything up to Thee, in union with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In His name, and by virtue of His infinite merits, I implore Thee, O

God, for patience in my sufferings, and for perfect resignation to whatever may befall me."

When St. Martin of Tours informed his assembled disciples that the hour of his death had come, they began to weep, and say: "Father, why do you leave us? To whom will you give us to be cared for? Ravening wolves will make a descent upon your deserted flock. We know you desire to be united with Jesus; but your reward is secure, and although it be deferred, it will always remain certain. Have pity on our distress; think of the dangers to which we shall be exposed." Then St. Martin prayed as follows: "Lord, I fear not death, but do not hesitate to let me live. If I am necessary to Thy people, I am ready to work and to suffer. Thy holy will be done."

True Submission to God's Will.

When the news was brought to Job that his cattle had been stolen by his enemies and his children killed in the destruction of his house, he was indeed grieved; yet he fell down and worshipped God, and prayed: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.) Again, when his whole body was covered with sores, and he lay helpless and friendless on a dunghill, he said to his complaining wife, "If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"

St. Elizabeth of Thuringia.

When St. Elizabeth saw the coffin containing the remains of her young husband, who had been killed in the holy wars, her whole body shuddered with painful grief. But soon recovering herself, she said: "Although I loved him with my whole heart, I do not complain, O Lord, that he has offered himself up to Thee, and lost his life in a foreign land, doing Thy will as he thought best. Thou knowest, O Lord, that had it been Thy divine will his life and presence would be to me the dearest thing on earth. I would have gladly begged through the world in his company all the days of my life. But now, O Lord, I do not murmur against Thy divine will, but resign myself and him to Thy kind providence. I would not bring him back to life against Thy will."

When afterwards she was driven from her castle, and refused shelter in Eisenach, where she had given so much charity, and compelled to take refuge in a stable, she had the fortitude to repair at the hour of matins to the monks' chapel, and beg them to sing a Te Deum in thanksgiving to God for her deep afflictions.

St. Hedwigis.

St. Hedwigis, a Polish princess, loved her husband and children with true maternal tenderness. Yet when the former died after a disgraceful im-

prisonment, and her oldest son fell in battle, she shed but few tears, and said: "It was God's will that they should die, and God wills always what is best for us."

St. Francis of Assisi.

One day, when St. Francis was enduring great pain, one of his brethren said thoughtlessly: "Pray to God, dear brother, that He would deal more gently with you, for it seems to me that He is treating you with much severity." Then St. Francis replied: "Be assured, brother, that if I did not know you said those words out of simplicity of heart, I would not see you any more; for you have dared to find fault with the will of God." Then the saint, notwithstanding his pains, kissed the ground and exclaimed: "I thank Thee, O God, for all my pains. If it be Thy holy will, send me more sufferings. For I wish Thee to afflict me unsparingly, it being my greatest happiness on earth to submit to Thy holy will."

St. Chrysostom.

When St. Chrysostom was addressing his last discourse to his people before going into undeserved exile, he said: "Christ is with me; whom shall I fear? Even if the whole ocean rose up and overwhelmed me I would consider it a trifle, for I would say all the time, 'Thy will be done, O Lord.' Not what this one or that one wills, but

what Thou willest. Thy will is my vesture, my rock, my staff." Thus he spoke and thus he lived, accepting all things from God's hand joyfully, adversity as well as prosperity.

Emperor Ferdinand.

The Emperor Ferdinand II. used to say: "Long ago would I have been crushed by my overwhelming misfortunes if I had not striven with all my will to submit to the will of God." Daily he used to pray: "Lord, if Thy honor and the good of my soul require that I should be greater than I am, lift me up, and I will glorify Thee. If Thy honor and my own good demand that I remain in my present position, I beg Thee to keep me there, and I will glorify Thee. If my degradation would contribute to Thy honor and my own good, then degrade me according to Thy good pleasure, and I will glorify Thee."

Thomas More.

That exemplary model of perfect patience, Sir Thomas More, regulated his will altogether in accordance with the will of God, as the following shows:

While detained at the court of the king, some distance from home, he received a letter from his wife informing him that a portion of their house had been destroyed by fire, together with all their barns and very valuable contents. More answered

his wife's letter as follows: "Dear Aloysia: You inform me that our barn and that of our neighbor have been destroyed with all their contents. It is a cause of sorrow, but not of murmuring against the will of God. Since it has pleased God to thus chastise us, we must not only be patient, but also willing to bear with the outstretched hand of the Lord. What we have lost was given us by God. As He has taken it away, welcome be His holy will. Let us not be cast down at the calamity; but, as is becoming, be reconciled, and even thank God the same as if He had sent us a fortune. And, indeed, if we look at it in the right light, this loss is a gain, a benefit from God. For what contributes to our sanctification is better known to God than to us.

"So I beg you be consoled, take the whole household with you into the church, thank God for what He gave and what He has taken away, and also for what He has left us. If He choose, He can easily deprive us of what is left to us. If He resolve to take more from us, let it be as He wills. Ascertain the amount lost by our neighbor, and beg him not to worry at the affliction. For I cannot permit him to suffer on my account, if I be compelled to part with all I have to compensate him.

"I request you, Aloysia, to rejoice in the Lord, together with all the children and the rest of the household. We are all in the hands of the Lord.

We are altogether dependent on His will, and never should we be cast down by any mishap. Farewell."

Contentment.

Charles Albert, whilst riding through the country with some of his courtiers, met on the roadside a shepherd-boy caring for a flock of sheep. The prince, reining up his horse, inquired who owned the sheep. The boy, pointing his stick to a neighboring farm-house, intimated that there the owner lived. "And what do you receive for your service?" inquired the prince further. "The owner supplies me with food and clothing," replied the boy. "That is not much," rejoined Charles Albert. "Have you any more?" artlessly asked the boy. The emperor stood still, pulled out his purse, and threw the boy a gold coin. Then, as he rode away, he said to his attendants: "Truly, that is a valuable lesson for a prince."

The Fourth Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

INSTRUCTION.

THE first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer have for their object that God would give us the grace to attain the end for which we have been created; namely, to honor Him, to serve Him, and to come to Him in heaven. The last four petitions have regard to what we need during our

earthly pilgrimage, for we live in much need and much anxiety of soul and body.

Hence we pray, first of all, for our daily bread; meaning thereby not only that ordinary article of food, but everything that we need for soul and body, that our bodily life may not become exhausted nor our spiritual life extinct, but that we may have strength and vigor to fulfil our duties as Christians.

Holy Scripture often understands by bread whatever is necessary for life, especially our bodily support. Thus says the Psalmist: "I have been young, and now am old: and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread." (Ps. xxxvi. 25.) Of Our Saviour we are told that He "went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day to eat bread." (Luke xiv. 1.)

We pray to God for nourishment for the body; for although we may work, the blessing comes not from ourselves, but from God. "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 7.) As the prayer is a universal one, we ask for bread, not for this one or that one only, but for us, that is to say, for all men; for a true Christian cannot eat his bread in contentment when he sees his fellow-beings in want.

We say, too, give us *our* daily bread, and not *the* daily bread; for we do not ask for a bread un-

suited to ourselves, but for that bread which a kind Providence has appointed for us, and to earn which we gladly exert ourselves. We do not seek the bread of unrighteousness, we do not wish to eat at the expense of other men's labor; we seek our own bread and not that of the stranger, as long as God is pleased to save us from becoming a burden on others.

When a bountiful God gives us bread, let us promise to consider it our common bread, and not to shut our brethren out from a share in it, but rather to break it cheerfully with the needy, and to acknowledge gratefully that the share of the poor has been intrusted to our hands, and that we are the stewards of the Lord.

We pray for bread, and show that we are satisfied if God gives us what is necessary only. It is not superfluity that we desire, but merely what is necessary for life, leaving it to the good pleasure of God to add more. We are not solicitous as to what we shall eat and what we shall drink, but we rely on Him who said: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." (Ps. liv. 23.) As we pray daily, we do not doubt but that our prayer will be heard daily.

"Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." (Matt. iv. 4.) The soul, then, must be fed as well as the body, and in the fourth petition we also pray for the nourishment of the soul. But the

bread of the soul is Christ and His grace. He and His word are the saving means that nourish the soul, and strengthen it against the disease and death of sin. "I am the bread of life," says the Lord. (John vi. 35.) Hence we pray that God's word may be spoken to us in sermons and instructions, that we may have zealous priests to dispense to us the sacraments, and above all that we ourselves be made worthy to receive often and profitably the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; for it is the supersubstantial bread that helps to life, for he who eats of it shall live forever. (John v. 35.)

Thus the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is a petition for the means by which the object of the first three petitions is to be secured.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them meat in due season." (Ps. cxliv. 15.) "Deal Thy bread to the hungry." (Is. lviii. 7.) "Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow. For the morrow will be solicitous for itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 34.) "Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content. For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 8, 9.) "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things

as you have: for He hath said: I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"We say, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' But what is our daily bread? Nothing else than the Lord's Supper." (St. Augustine.)

"We have need to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' not only that we may have food, but also that it may be reached to us by the hand of the Lord, which imparts to the daily bread so sound and healthful a force that the food is profitable to the body and the body serves the soul." (St. Chrysostom.) "As we consist of two natures, one of which is corporeal, the other spiritual, we ask for bread for both. For our corporeal being we ask for earthly bread, and for our soul heavenly food, the bread of angels; who, as spiritual beings, nourish themselves on no other food but Thyself, O God, who art the feeder of spiritual existence." (Louis of Granada.) "Give us bread, O Lord. No superfluity, no luxury, no golden ornaments, no glistening stones, no acres, no authority over people, no silken garments, no musical delights of the ear, nothing by which the soul would be diverted from high and divine things, but only bread." (St. Gregory of Nyssa.) "A disciple of Christ prays properly only for his daily subsistence, for he is forbidden to be solicitous for the morrow; for it is contradictory and unfitting

that we should pray to live long in this world, we who pray that God's kingdom may soon come to us." (St. Cyprian.) "He who eats honestly well-earned bread eats his own bread. But he who eats bread dishonestly earned eats the bread of others." (St. Chrysostom.) "If Christ is our daily bread, why do you partake of it only once a year? Live so that you may receive it daily." (St. Ambrose.)

EXAMPLES.

Remarkable Instance of Prayer Heard.

There is no prayer more effective to influence the heart of a father, and move him to a speedy response, than the prayer of his children for bread. But if the heart of an earthly father is so powerfully affected by the words, "Give us bread," can it be less effective with our loving Father in heaven? Certainly not. Whosoever, with child-like confidence, sends up such a prayer to heaven will surely find a favorable hearing. The following incident shows this:

Some years ago a poor young shoemaker died, leaving a widow and three children without any means. In a short time they were without anything to eat, and knew not where to find any. The anguish of the female mind in such circumstances is bitter indeed; but how much more so when she is a widowed mother with several starving children! Then she said to the two oldest,

"I cannot give you anything to eat, for I have nothing; let us kneel down and ask the merciful God to help us." So they knelt down, and all together repeated the Our Father, being unusually fervent at the words, "Give us this day our daily bread." Just about that time a parishioner had died, and his friends came to the pastor with some offerings for Masses for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The pastor said he did not need the money, but would see that the Masses were celebrated, while the friends could give the alms to some poor person. God guided their footsteps to the house of the poor woman and her children as they were praying for their daily bread.

Contentment.

Many bright examples of satisfied moderation are to be found in Holy Scripture.

Thus King Solomon prayed, "Lord, give me neither beggary nor riches: give me only the necessaries of life." (Prov. xxx. 8.)

The prophet Eliseus led the Assyrian soldiers to the king and said to him, "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." (4 Kings vi. 22.)

A very special model of contentment is St. Francis Assisi. While making a pilgrimage to Rome in company of his friend, Brother Massaeus, the saint was almost fainting from weakness and the heat of the weather, when they came to a clear,

fresh spring issuing from between two stones. The two pilgrims sat down on the grass, and made their frugal meal on some hard, dry crusts of bread that they had begged on the way. Francis became quite cheerful, and made no effort to conceal his pleasant state of mind. "O Brother Massaeus!" he exclaimed, "let us make merry, and thank God for the rich treasure He has sent to me." Brother Massaeus wondered where the great treasure was, for they had but bread and water for dinner, and not too much of that. "O Massaeus!" replied St. Francis, "is it not equal to a great treasure to have here this beautiful shady spot, with its running stream of sweet water and its green, grassy turf, to say nothing of the good wholesome bread that God has induced good, kind people to give us on the way?"

Be not Solicitous for the Morrow.

St. Paul, of Lower Thebais, the first hermit, in order to escape the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Decius, fled in his twenty-third year to the country of Upper Thebais. There for thirty years he lived on the fruit of one date-tree and the water of the same spring. During the sixty years following he lived on a half loaf of bread brought to him daily by a raven. In the year 341 the saintly hermit, warned by Heaven, went to visit St. Antony, when, lo and behold! the same

raven came and brought this time a whole loaf of bread, and laid it at their feet.

God Rewards Charitable Gifts.

There lived in Bavaria a devout pastor named Fenneberg. He was kind beyond measure, and hence he was himself often very much embarrassed for the necessaries of life. It was in such moments that his confidence in God was deepest.

It happened one day that he needed money for a certain purpose, and knew not where to procure it. Such a position, for a devoted pastor of souls, is trying in the extreme. His heart sympathizes with all the members of his congregation, as does a father's heart for each and every child of his family; and it pains him deeply to see want, and not have the means to relieve it. It occurred to him that some time previous he had lent two dollars to a person to enable him to go to a distant town in search of employment. He did not regret the loan, but as the amount now needed was just two dollars, the incident naturally came to his mind. Standing uneasily at his window, he said: "Beloved Lord and Master, Thou knowest that for Thy sake I loaned a poor man two dollars; I beg Thee to inspire him to remit them to me now in my hour of necessity." He had hardly finished his simple prayer when a smart knock was heard at the door, and on opening it he found there the letter-carrier with a package containing two hun-

dred dollars, and addressed to the pastor. The matter was soon explained. The poor man who had borrowed the two dollars found steady employment in the service of a wealthy townsman, to whom he related the goodness of the poor priest. This man, though wealthy, had not his heart in his riches, nor was it made of marble; he had a Christian heart, into which the light of charity easily penetrated. So he said to himself: "I have much more than I need, and a charitable pastor of souls must have many ways that the world knows nothing about of employing money for the good of souls." Moved by such reflections, he remitted to the priest the two hundred dollars—a hundred dollars for each one loaned in kindness.

The Blessed Bread.

When the great Cardinal Bellarmine was asked what class of persons were most likely to attain their salvation, he replied: "The class who earn their daily bread. For these people," said he, "work steadily from morning to night; so there is no temptation to sloth, and many opportunities for the exercise of the most heroic virtues. Their scant subsistence relieves them of many temptations. With truth can they pray: 'Give us *our* daily bread:' and with truth can they say: 'this is *our* daily bread;' for it is in every sense their own."

The Bleeding Bread.

The venerable, wonder-working Father Matthew Bussi was once invited to supper by a dishonest lawyer of Venice. Taking a piece of bread, he squeezed it, and a stream of blood was seen issuing from it. This he showed to his host, and said: "Such is the bread you have on your table. You squeeze the very life's blood from poor widows and orphans, and yet presume to say daily to your heavenly Father, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' You ought to shudder at the words, and remember the dreadful bread you eat, moistened with the blood and tears of the unfortunate."

Reverence for God's Word.

Frances of Jesus had an inappeasable desire to hear God's word, for in it she found strength and consolation. It was as necessary and dear to her soul as her daily bread. When listening to a sermon her whole countenance would glow with respectful devotion. It mattered little whether the preacher observed the rules of rhetoric or not, her ear was attentive and her eyes shed tears. To some young people, who found fault with a preacher's mode of delivery, she said: "When exiles in a strange land hear news from home, they pay little attention to the language or manner of the messenger, if they can only get the news. Should not we, who are pilgrims and strangers in

this vale of tears, be glad to hear news from our Father in heaven, no matter who brings it?"

The Fifth Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US."

INSTRUCTION.

In the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray for bread for soul and body. But how often, in our forgetfulness of the gifts of our divine Giver, do we sin by ingratitude and forgetfulness of God! Hence, to the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," we add at once, "And forgive us our trespasses."

Now all men without exception are sinners. The preacher saith: "There is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles. vii. 21.) Solomon the wise man asks: "Who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin?" (Prov. xx. 9.) St. Paul says that the man who says he is free from sin deceives himself, and the truth is not in him. Hence all men have good reason to sue for pardon before God from their sins.

But God will forgive us our sins only on condition that we forgive those who offend us. He has, as it were, made a covenant with us sinners in these words: "If you forgive those who have offended you, I will forgive your offences com-

mitted against Me. If you do not forgive, you cannot expect Me to forgive." This truth we learn from Our Saviour's own lips, when relating the well-known parable of the unmerciful servant, who had been relieved of a large debt by his master, and then cast his fellow-servant into prison for a debt of a hundred pence. When the lord heard of this action of the unmerciful servant, he called him and said to him: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt." "So also," adds Christ, "shall My heavenly Father do to you if you forvive not every one his brother from your heart." (Matt. xviii. 32–35.) Hence He commanded us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us."

We pray then in vain to God, Forgive us our debts, if we be hard-hearted against our fellow men and cherish enmity against them. Indeed by so doing we utter the Lord's Prayer to our destruction, for we really ask God to forgive us in the same proportion as we forgive others.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"From my secret sins, cleanse me, O Lord." (Ps. xviii. 13.) "Who is a God like to Thee,

who takest away iniquity, and passest by the sin of the remnant of Thy inheritance?" (Mich. vii. 18.) "Say not: I will return evil: wait for the Lord and He will deliver thee." (Prov. xx. 22.) "If you will forgive men their offences: your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences." (Matt. vi. 14.) "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or ass going astray, bring it back to him." (Ex. xxiii. 4.) "When thy enemy shall fall, be not glad, and in his ruin let not thy heart rejoice." (Prov. xxiv. 17.) "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him water to drink." (Prov. xxv. 21.) "Love your enemies: do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great." (Luke vi. 35.) "Let not the sun go down upon your anger." (Eph. iv. 26.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"How forcibly and profitably we are reminded that we are sinners by the soul remembering itself while asking for pardon. By praying for forgiveness every day we are every day reminded that we are sinning every day. To your enemies wish only good: only cease to have enmity towards him, and he will be your enemy no longer. It is not the human nature within him that is your enemy, but sin. Only remember our origin: God is our Father, the Church is our mother, therefore we are brothers." (St. Augustine.) "How can you raise

your hands to heaven, or move your tongue, or seek forgiveness? For if God will pardon you your sins, you do not permit it as long as you have hostile feelings towards your neighbor." (St. Chrysostom.) "If thou do not forgive the indignity done to thyself, thou dost not offer a prayer for thyself, but seekest and bringest down on thyself the curse of God." (St. Athanasius.) "Thou hurtest thyself if thou do not love thy enemy." (St. Bernard.)

EXAMPLES.

Forgive us Our Trespasses.

Even under the Old Dispensation there were many good and pious servants of God who used to cry out, "Forgive us, O Lord, our debts." In the New Dispensation such persons are beyond all reckoning.

Filled with grief, Isaias exclaims, "Be not very angry, O Lord, and remember no longer our iniquity; behold, see we are all Thy people." (Is. lxiv. 9.)

Daniel, in a spirit of penance, raised his imploring voice and prayed: "I beseech Thee, O Lord God, great and terrible, who keepest the covenant and mercy to them that love Thee, we have sinned, we have committed iniquity. But to Thee, O Lord, belong mercy and forgiveness. Incline Thine ear and hear. Forgive." (Dan. ix. 4.)

David wept and groaned day and night because

of his trespasses against God's law, and ceased not to pray to be forgiven.

In the same strain prayed the poor publican in the Temple, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." Mary Magdalene, at the feet of Jesus, begged to have her sins forgiven. And many sins were forgiven her.

So it was at all times proved that God is a merciful God to those who call on Him, if they themselves forgive those who offend them.

St. Bernard.—This servant of God, who may be justly styled an angel of innocence, often used to say to himself: "How dare I presume to raise my eyes to the face of God, who is so good a Father, while I am so undutiful a son? Break forth, my eyes, into a torrent of tears; let shame cover my countenance, let my life waste with pain, and amid sighs and tears over myself may my days vanish."

Forgive and you will be Forgiven.

St. John the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria, had often advised a great lord to be reconciled with his enemy; but finding him obstinate to his advice he conducted him one day into a private chapel to be present at Mass. There was no one but St. John with his server, and the irreconcilable lord, at the Mass. In those days it was the practice for the celebrant and the people to recite together the Pater Noster aloud. When the petition was reached, "Forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive them who trespass against us," the Patriarch lowered his voice, as did also the boy, according to previous instructions, so that the lord heard himself only saying the words. Then the priest turned towards him, and said in gentle tones: "Think, I implore you, on the words you have just spoken to God! While asking His forgiveness you have asserted that you forgive those who have trespassed against yourself." The great man felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen on him, and throwing himself prostrate on his face he said, "Your servant is ready to do what you have asked me to do." So he at once went away, and was reconciled to his former enemy.

Magnanimity.

St. Anselm.—Whilst William the Conqueror was King of England, St. Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury. The king, who was unjust and violent to a degree, robbed the churches of much of their wealth, and then sought to compel St. Anselm to ratify the theft and even to pay a large sum of money himself. The holy archbishop protested against the injustice, and defended the rights of the Church, thereby incurring the angry hatred of the king and much persecution. He was deprived of his diocese and compelled to leave England. But he who had long before renounced the world, and acquired virtue under the guidance of the holy rule of St. Benedict, had also learned

to forgive his enemies and persecutors. Free from all spite or rancor, the bishop, presenting himself before the king, said, "I am now about to leave the country, and if you do not object, I wish to leave Your Majesty my blessing." Then he set out for Rome, and soon after was present at the Council of Bary, where steps were taken to excommunicate King William of England for his outrageous conduct against God's Church and its clergy. But St. Anselm, falling on his knees, begged the bishops to spare the king, which they did at the request of the lenient and forgiving bishop.

A Priest's Revenge.—In a little village in the Vosges Mountains there once dwelt a French priest named Wagner, who to much amiability of character united strength and vigor. Though he would not offend a child, he was inexorable in denouncing and suppressing abuses in his parish. Consequently he had some enemies, one of whom one day fired a pistol at him, inflicting a wound of which he died in a few days. The murderer was condemned to imprisonment for life. The pastor then made his will, and chose as his heirs for everything he owned the children of his murderer.

The Duke of Guise.—A certain Protestant was resolved to kill the Duke of Guise, who always showed himself a zealous defender of the Catholic Church. The attempt being frustrated, the duke

said to the would-be murderer: "Have I ever done you any wrong?" "No," replied the other. "What, then, could induce you to try to kill me?" "I wanted to save my religion," replied the man. "Ah, well," said the duke, "if your religion requires murder to protect it, my religion tells me to love my enemies. I forgive you."

Max Emanuel.—This general was once retreating through the mountain passes of the Tyrol, when the hostile inhabitants concealed themselves in many places in ambush, and harassed him and his army as they passed. His faithful vassal rode by the general's side, and would change from left to right, and right to left, according as he anticipated danger on one side or the other. At last he received a shot intended for Max Emanuel, and fell dead by his side. Afterwards the murderer was discovered and brought before Max Emanuel, who not only pardoned him, but furnished him with means to get away from the people, who were not actuated with the same spirit of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a Christian's Revenge.—An inhabitant of Corsica was one day, with three friends, resting himself near a fountain on the grounds of Count Frasle, when he saw coming towards him a man who had murdered his son, and known only to himself. Greeting him politely, he asked him to share in their refreshments. The guilty man was so frightened at the meeting, that the blood seemed to chill in his veins; but seeing no means of

escape, he joined the party, more dead than alive, feeling that at last retribution had come, and he would be handed over to the authorities, if not murdered by the outraged father. Soon the three friends took their departure, and the murderer was left alone with the father of the young man he had killed. "Your life," said the bereaved father, "is now in my hands, and I might now avenge the death of my son. You have brought grief and suffering to my family; but I will forget my wrongs if you promise always to treat your enemies as I now treat you, and learn that to forgive is better than to seek revenge." With these words he left the guilty man, who at once began a life of severe penance in atonement for his crime.

Reward for Forgiving Our Enemies.

St. John Gualbert.—St. John Gualbert, founder of the renowned monastery of Vallombrosa, while yet in the world met the murderer of his brother, on a Good Friday. Gualbert was a powerful man, and there being no chance of escape, the murderer believed that his end was come. So throwing himself on his knees before Gualbert, he begged him, for the sake of Our Lord, who had died on that day for the sins of men, to spare him. Gualbert answered: "Since you ask me for pardon in the name of God, and on this day, I cannot refuse." Then the saint embraced him, and repairing to a neighboring church he perceived the figure of our

crucified Redeemer bowing its head, as if in approval of his Christian feelings and action. Here, too, Gualbert found his first grace, that afterwards led to his sublime holiness in the service of God.

Nicephorus and Sapricius.—Nicephorus and Sapricius, two Christians living at Antioch under the reign of the Emperor Aurelian, although at first loving each other like brothers, became afterwards such enemies that they would not speak to each other. At last Nicephorus entered seriously into himself, and regretting the uncharitable feelings existing between him and his former friend, made repeated efforts to be reconciled. He even went to the house of Sapricius, and threw himself at his feet, asking forgiveness, which the latter persistently refused. At last, one day, Sapricius was arrested because of his religion, which he steadfastly professed before the judges. The governor ordered him to be placed in a kind of press, where he was slowly and painfully squeezed almost to death. Yet, as he remained true to his faith, he was condemned to lose his head. Then Nicephorus ran to meet him, and throwing himself before him, cried and begged, saying: "Martyr of Christ, forgive me, as Christ forgave His enemies." But Sapricius turned aside his head and deigned no answer. Nicephorus persisted so in his prayer for pardon, that the pagans looked upon him as a crazy man, and laughed at his eagerness to obtain pardon from one who was con-

demned to death as a criminal. But Heaven could not look with indifference on the want of charity in Sapricius. The same Jesus who had taught His disciples to say: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us," withdrew His grace from the hard-hearted Sapricius. Then what happened? When the moment came for the execution of the sentence, and Sapricius should place his head on the block to receive the blow of the axe, he hesitated, then denied Christ, and promised to worship the false gods. "No, no," exclaimed Nicephorus, "you must not throw away your martyr-crown, already stained with your blood, and for which you have already suffered so much. Do not dishonor your Redeemer, who is even now holding that crown over your head." But Sapricius would not take advice from a man whom he hated. Then Nicephorus, grieved to the heart at his enemy's apostasy, cried out: "I too am a Christian, and profess what Sapricius has renounced. Permit me to repair this scandal by dying in his place." The prayer was granted. Thus was the crown of martyrdom denied to the unforgiving Sapricius and bestowed on the forgiving Nicephorus.

The Sixth Petition of the Our Father.

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

INSTRUCTION.

To test a thing means to experiment upon it, or

to place it in certain positions and circumstances, from the influence of which upon it and its corresponding changes it may be discovered what is in it and of what it is made. Thus the lapidary tests metals and stones by subjecting them to fire and acids, to ascertain their value and quality. So, too, are men tested by their fellow men, who place them in various circumstances and opportunities that are calculated to try their prudence, courage, honesty, and other qualifications.

God Himself exercises such tests on the souls of men. Holy Scripture furnishes us with many an example. He tested and tried our first parents. He tried the faith and obedience of Abraham, commanding him to slay his only son. The elder Tobias was tried by God; for it was not by accident that the dung of the swallows fell into his eyes and deprived him of sight. Not that God needed to make such tests in order to know His creatures, "for the wisdom of God is great, seeing all men without ceasing." God's motive for trying and testing men lies in the nature of men themselves.

God created man a free and self-conscious being. Hence man must himself first declare for God and His law before God can make him happy. In order that this be done, God puts man in some occasion or opportunity, in which the latter chooses, and decides whether he will obey God or the world, whether he will follow the

higher and holier will or the will of the flesh; that is to say, God tries or tempts man.

No man can escape these trials, and when we say, "Lead us not into temptation," we must not presume to ask God to exempt us altogether from trials or temptations; for they are to us opportunities of winning a crown. This is what St. James the apostle teaches when he exclaims: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him." (James i. 12.) Thus if we ask God to free us altogether from every temptation, it would be equivalent to saying, "Deprive me of all opportunity of winning a victory and of gaining a crown."

To tempt means also to incite one to commit sin. In this sense God cannot tempt us, for He is holiness itself, and therefore abhors all sin. St. James says, "Let no man when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God; for God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man." (James i. 13.) These wicked temptations come partly from our own internal enemies, from our evil inclinations and our flesh; and partly from our outer enemies, the world and the devil. It is only in the following sense that God "*leads* us into temptation," namely, that He permits them to come to us, either for the purpose of increasing our merits or of humiliating our pride and punishing our sins. It is from such

evil temptations we seek to be freed when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation;" or we pray at least for strength from above not to yield under the trials.

This sixth petition in the Our Father follows naturally the fifth petition, in which we have already besought the heavenly Father for remission of the guilt due our sins. In the sixth we pray to be saved from a relapse into sin; saying, as it were, "Lord, cleanse us from our sins; and since through Thy mercies we have been washed from them, do not permit us to taint ourselves anew by new sins and new guilt."

But it is not enough to pray, "Lead us not into temptation;" we ourselves must be careful not to stumble easily into the way of temptation and sin, but faithfully make use of such means as are adapted to the prevention of them and of conquering them. "Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect." (Eph. vi. 13.)

The chief means to be used against temptations are the following:

1. Speedy flight from danger, and from evil occasions. The more attention one bestows on the inducements to sin, the more perilous is the struggle, the more difficult and uncertain the victory. David, although a man according to God's own heart, trifled with a dangerous occasion, and

fell into adultery and murder. The wise Solomon, by imprudent familiarity with silly women, became an idolater. St. Peter, by associating with the enemies of Jesus around the fire of coals, became a traitor.

2. Inexorable resistance. When the plant is still enclosed in the seed it is easily eradicated; but once it has become a tree, who can bend or break it? A spark of fire is easily stamped out, a flame may be stifled; but who can check a conflagration? So it is when a man neglects to stamp out the smouldering flames of passion, and lets them become a consuming conflagration.

3. Persistent resistance. The history of the martyrs furnishes instances of the disgraceful fall of some who lacked perseverance. The evil spirit is not willing to lose his prey, for he says, "I will return into my house whence I came out." (Luke xi. 24.) Temptations, instead of ceasing at conversion, often become greater. Hence the warning, "When thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation." (Ecclus. ii. 1.)

4. Occupation. "Idleness is the mother of mischief," says an old and true proverb. As long as David was busily engaged at the wars, or in the affairs of peace, he was a truly virtuous king. It was only after he had sent Joab as a substitute in the wars, and remained himself at home in idleness and luxury, that he fell into grievous sins.

5. Temperance in eating and drinking. Self-denial and mortification of the senses were the means most commonly used by all the saints to restrain the impulses of nature, as well as to overcome all temptations.

6. Every exercise of piety; especially meditation, prayer, and frequent reception of the sacraments. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Ecclus. vii. 40.) "As soon as you begin to pray you cease to sin; as soon as you fold your hands in prayer temptation flees from your heart." (St. Augustine.) Christ, too, bade us pray against temptation: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) He taught us to say, "Lead us not into temptation."

7. Confidence in God. "Those who hope in the Lord," saith David, "shall not perish."

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"What doth he know that hath not been tried?" (Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.) "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me: and He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor. xii. 7–9.) "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them

that love Him. Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God: for God is not a tempter of evils: and He tempteth no man." (James i. 12, 13.) "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you." (James iv. 7.) "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.) "Be prudent therefore, and watch in prayers." (1 Pet. iv. 7.) "Be sober and watch." (1 Pet. v. 8.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we pray that we be not led into temptation, we are reminded of our weakness and helplessness, inasmuch as we pray that no pride may arise within us, that no one may esteem himself something in his own pride and presumption, that no one may consider his fame his own; for the Lord of humility has taught and said: 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;' hence when an humble and submissive confession is put forth, and everything is ascribed to God, all that we pray for with fear and reverence for God will, through His loving-kindness, be granted." (St. Cyprian.) "Whosoever does not devote himself to prayer places himself in temptation." (St. Peter Chrysologus.) "When prayer precedes business sin finds no entrance to the soul." (St. Gregory of Nyssa.) "Worldlings do not know what a temptation is, for they are so entangled in

vice and buried in earthly affairs that they always anticipate evil and help the devil to tempt them." (St. Antoninus.) "The wicked enemy can cause passions to rage within thee, but it rests with thee either to give them encouragement or to refuse them gratification." (St. Bernard.)

THREE COUNSELS AGAINST TEMPTATION.

1. Make known your temptations to a pious, wise, and faithful friend. The most illustrious ascetics, in their own many temptations and sufferings of soul, have discovered that heaven's light never was bright within them till they revealed their temptations and troubled conscience to some master of the spiritual life. You must reveal your temptations, or they will rack your heart and drive you to misery. Do not reveal them to a fool. Do not imitate the two wretches who assaulted Susanna. They made known their temptations to each other, to their ruin; for if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the pit.

2. Always bear in mind that many temptations are awaiting you. An aged anchoret used to conduct his newly arrived disciples to the top of a high tower, and showing them the outlying stretch of country would say: "You must know that if every foot of that expanse were planted with crosses, they would not equal your crosses in number. Prepare to meet temptations, for you

will have to suffer much here." Thus he fortified the new beginners in religious life.

Sennacherib, King of Assyria, with a numerous and powerful army overran the land of Judea, and turned his whole strength to the capture of Jerusalem. But the wise and prudent king Ezechias, himself a brave and experienced soldier, urged his people to resistance and victory. "Behave like men," he said, "and take courage; be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of the Assyrians, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there are many more with us than with him. For with him is an arm of flesh: with us, the Lord our God, who is our helper, and fighteth for us. And the people were encouraged with these words of Ezechias, King of Juda." (2 Paral. xxxii. 7, 8.) Thus, neither should we quail before approaching temptations, nor fear their force and numbers. With us is the Lord our God, our helper, who doth battle with us. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Whilst the wicked draw near against me to eat my flesh, my enemies that trouble me have themselves been weakened, and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident." (Ps. xxvi. 1–3.) "I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me." (Ps. iii. 7.)

3. Remove all occasions of temptation. When the flint and the steel are struck together, sparks spring forth, the flame is kindled. Take away the tinder, if you do not want fire. So, too, remove the tinder of temptation or it will blaze up into a conflagration. Go, then, ye fools, and fill your money-bags, crave after honors and dignities, hunger and thirst after pleasures, give free rein to your senses. It is on such fluffy, flaky tinder that temptations take hold, and whirl you to destruction.

SAYINGS OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS.

A certain hermit used to say: "As no one can harm the man who stands by the side of the emperor, neither can Satan do us any injury if our soul is attached to God. For it is written: 'Draw near to Me and I will turn towards thee.' But we lift ourselves up too often, hence it is easy for the wicked enemy to hurl our souls down into the mire of passion."

A brother once said to a holy anchoret: "I feel no strife or struggle in my heart." The anchoret replied: "You are like a house with many doors, and all standing open, so that every stranger can pass in at leisure, and you do not know it. For if you had a door to your heart and kept it fastened against the entrance of evil thoughts, you would soon see and feel a mighty struggle going on without."

It is related of one of the Fathers of the desert, that when idle thoughts would suggest to him, "Let things go for to-day, and do penance to-morrow," he would contradict them and say, "Not at all: but do penance to-day; to-morrow trust to the will of God."

Another ancient Father used to say: "If our outer man do not fast, our inner man will starve unto spiritual death."

Still another used to say: "Satan has three powers that pave the way to all kinds of vice. The first is forgetfulness of God; the second is negligence; and the third is concupiscence. Forgetfulness begets negligence, negligence begets concupiscence. With concupiscence comes disaster to man. But if a man be abstemious and reasonable, he will not be entrapped in the meshes of negligence. If he be not negligent, he will escape the snares of concupiscence. If he shun concupiscence, with the help of God he will never fall."

Another said: "Observe silence, and repress idle thoughts; do not cease to meditate, whether lying or standing, and always live in the fear of God. If you do this, you need not fear the assaults of the enemy."

Another spiritual father said to one of his brethren: "The devil is the enemy, and you are the house besieged by that enemy. Without cessation he throws at you everything that is filthy, and fills

you with uncleanness. Your duty it is to throw out whatever he throws in. If you be negligent and slow, your house will soon be filled with the uncleanness of sin, so that you cannot stay within, nor yet go out. Throw out his unwholesome missiles, and your house will be clean and healthy."

EXAMPLES.

From Holy Scripture.

We know how Our Saviour repelled the tempter. He did not permit Himself to hold a discussion with him, but relying on the word of God, said: "It is written." (Matt. iv. 4.) Job withstood great temptations steadfastly, and in reward received afterwards the double of what he had lost. (Job xlii. 10.) St. Paul was able to say that God augmented His graces in proportion to the temptations sent. He says: "When I am weak, then am I powerful." (2 Cor. xii. 10.) St. Peter, on the other hand, fell, because he confided too much in himself, and had boasted: "Although all shall be scandalized in Thee; yet not I." (Mark xiv. 29.)

God stands by us in Temptations.

St. Catherine of Siena, like all other servants of God, had to tread the thorny path of temptation and spiritual aridity; often undergoing trials that endured for a year at a time. But Our Saviour often sent her peace of mind, and sometimes even appeared to her to enable her to bear her troubles

patiently. One day, after being sorely tormented with the most disgusting thoughts, when Christ had dispelled the dark clouds from her soul, she said to Him: "Where wast Thou, O Lord, while such dreadful thoughts were haunting my mind?" Christ replied: "I was a spectator in thy heart." When she inquired: "How couldst Thou be in my heart while such thoughts were there?" He asked: "Did these thoughts please thee?" "By no means, Lord; far otherwise," was her answer. Then Christ said: "That is what My presence effected, and without it thou couldst easily have yielded assent to the thoughts."

St. Jerome's Struggle.

Among the many servants of God who in their early life sustained the most formidable assaults of Satan perhaps St. Jerome stands in the foremost place.

Leaving the world, he first made a visit to the holy places in Jerusalem, and then took up his abode in a desert place, where he passed many years. Although he led a life of the strictest austerity, he was so tormented with temptations that his account of his struggles should move us to tears. He himself thus wrote to a devout friend: "Alas! even in this desolate place, where the drought and heat render life almost impossible, the most distressing temptations persistently besieged my poor wearied soul. I hurried away to

solitude and penance in the hope of conquering my evil inclinations, and to bewail my past sins. I have clothed my body in the coarsest of penitential garbs, have bedewed the ground with tears, and sighed and groaned day and night. My bed was the earth. My food, even in sickness, was coarse herbs and water. And yet in this dreadful place, whither I came in order to escape hell, in the company of scorpions and wild beasts, I often fancied myself in the most seductive saloons of a great city. My features were haggard and worn from fasting, yet my soul burned with the fire of passion. In my deplorable agony of mind, I threw myself in spirit at the feet of Jesus, watered His feet with my tears, and by many successive weeks of fasting labored to conquer my rebellious flesh. I cried to Heaven for relief, I fairly howled, and beat my breast. At last God was pleased to hear my prayers, and sending His grace to my soul, gave me tranquillity."

Heroic Resistance.

Resistance to temptation should not be merely interior. The tempted Christian must struggle outwardly, as many saints have done to a heroic and superhuman degree.

When St. Thomas Aquinas was abandoning the world, his brother, who wished to retain him, tempted him by placing near him a young and fascinating girl, who was to be rewarded with a sum of

money if she could decoy the saint into sin. Thomas first raised his eyes to God for a moment, and then drove her away from the house. He then offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who was pleased to spare him evermore from temptation against holy purity.

A similar grace was bestowed by Heaven upon St. Benedict, the patriarch of the monks in western Christendom. Once he was so severely tempted that he was on the point of leaving the desert and returning to the world. But seeing near him a thick undergrowth of thorns and briars, he took off his garment, and throwing himself headlong into the bushes, rolled himself amid the thistles and thorns till the blood flowed in streams from his lacerated body. Thus he conquered sin, and was never again troubled with a similar temptation. This incident in the life of St. Benedict is given us by the holy Pope Gregory in his biography of that holy man. When temptations assailed St. Francis Assisi he used to plunge up to his neck in frozen water. St. Bernard used a similar remedy. Both conquered the tempter. Thus does God reward those who wish to serve Him.

The Seventh Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

"BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN."

INSTRUCTION.

When we ask God to deliver us from evil, we do not understand by this evil, sufferings, troubles,

sickness, or other afflictions. For these pave the way for us to heaven. Indeed, such was the way chosen by Christ,—the way of suffering.

Even death is not an evil from which we should pray to be spared. To the pious Christian it is the greatest benefit, since it opens the gates for admittance into heaven.

The evil from which we desire so ardently to be freed is sin.

Sin is the greatest evil on earth. It robs the soul of whatever good it may have acquired, it distorts God's image within us, takes away all beauty, and makes our soul an object of divine displeasure. It robs us of internal peace even on earth, and of our future happiness in heaven.

Sin is also the source of all the other evils in the world. By sin came poverty, misery, grief, sickness, death, and all other calamities. It transformed the garden of paradise into a vale of tears and woe.

That the sixth and seventh petitions in the Lord's Prayer have a bearing on the same point, is shown by the word "but," which connects the two petitions together.

Moreover, we cry in vain to God to deliver us from evil, which is sin, if we ourselves have no horror for sin, nor cherish in our hearts a wish to combat it, by the avoidance of evil occasions and the application of Christian means of saving grace.

In this seventh petition we also ask God for

deliverance from all those temporal evils which are not necessary or useful to our soul's welfare. The Church herself in many of her prayers teaches us thus.

The word *Amen* signifies, So let it be. This word we add to the Lord's Prayer in order to express our great eagerness to be heard favorably. It is as if we said: Grant, O Lord, what we have just been praying for. Confirm the words of Thy divine Son, which we have just repeated in His prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"I pray not, heavenly Father, that Thou shouldst take them out of the world," that is, free them altogether from temptation, "but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil." (John xvii. 15.) "But if the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity according to all the abominations which the wicked man useth to work, shall he live? all his justices which he had done shall not be remembered: in the prevarication, by which he hath prevaricated, and in his sin, which he hath committed, in them he shall die." (Ezech. xviii. 24.)

"Offer sacrifice no more in vain: incense is an abomination to Me. The new moons, and the sabbath, and other festivals I will not abide, your assemblies are wicked. My soul hateth your new moons, and your solemnities: they are become

troublesome to Me, I am weary of bearing them. And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes from you: and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear: for your hands are full of blood." (Is. i. 13–15.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"We must pray that we be not led, not only into an evil which we have not, for for this we pray in the sixth precept, but also that we be freed from the evil into which we have been actually led, that is, from sin." (St. Augustine.) "The sinner forfeits the happiness for which he was created, and finds misery for which he was not created. Hence we cry to God, deliver us from the evil of sin." (The same.) "Among earthly things we should call nothing evil except sin." (Cassian.) "Many think that eternal damnation is the last and greatest evil; but I believe and shall continually teach, that it is a far greater evil to offend Jesus Christ than to suffer in the flames of hell." (St. Chrysostom.)

PROCESSIONS AND LITANIES.

All men have within them a consciousness that there is some high Power who sends them trials and afflictions, which no human sagacity can prevent; and also that this same high Power can be propitiated by prayers and invocations. Hence, the heathens, although they knew not the true

God, offered prayers and sacrifices. Thus we find that the heathens, when they wished to be successful in war, or to avert some calamity, sought to conciliate the gods by sacrifices; and the greater the necessity, the richer and more abundant were the victims. They offered up even human sacrifices; and parents offered what was most precious to them—their own children.

The Christian is more happily situated than the pagan. He knows that in heaven he has a Father, who continues to be his Father even when in anger. Knowing, too, that He is not to be appeased by a bloody sacrifice, he offers Him the bloodless oblations of contrition and compunction, of good works, and of prayer and praise. As he has been taught to pray for deliverance from evil, he has recourse to prayer in the hour of suffering and trial.

Such prayers in common and public for the averting of temporal evils, such as plagues, wars, droughts, famines, and others, are the religious processions and the litanies. The latter, although used on many other occasions, public and private, are associated with processions, and always said or sung at them. They consist of a series of invocations, addressed to God sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly through His saints, begging the granting of the divine protection and mercy.

Such processions are termed extraordinary when held on account of some special occurrence.

Others are ordinary, and are held on regular feasts of the Church, and other days; as for instance, to beg God's blessing on the crops. These public prayer-marches begin with a litany, recited or chanted alternately by the faithful.

These processions are also a figure of our journey through life, which should be always accompanied by prayer. The cross is carried before us, because we should at all times be followers of Christ crucified, expecting our salvation through the cross, which should be the weapon in our struggle. The banners are ensigns showing us to be soldiers enrolled in the army of Christ, and that we are sworn to maintain His cause. The exit is a figure of our going forth to encounter the trials of life; the return amid joyful chants represents our entrance to the heavenly Jerusalem.

We are not to suppose that processions are a new devotion in the Church. They were held by the Israelites. Before Jericho could be taken they had to march about the city for seven days in praying procession, during which the priests blew the trumpets. (Josue vi. 16.) David and Solomon instituted solemn processions, in which the Ark of the Covenant was carried. In the New Testament the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, amid the waving of palm branches and the chanting of songs of welcome, was a solemn public procession. Often are the relics of martyrs taken from their tombs, and amid

crowds of people carried with much solemnity into some church. In times of special opposition of the Church the bishops used to order the holding of public religious processions. Thus Mammertus, the Bishop of Vienne in France, ordered the processions on the Rogation days. The Litany of the Saints was introduced by Pope Gregory the Great into the grand procession held at Rome, about the year 600, for the cessation of a dreadful plague then raging in that city.

EXAMPLES.

Sufferings and Trials are not Evils.

By means of sickness and other trials, God has led many souls over the road of heroic virtue to the peace and happiness of heaven. A very touching example of this is furnished us by St. Jerome, from the history of a certain widow, named Blasilla.

"Let us study the life" he says, "of our Blasilla. She used to stand for hours before the glass, dressing her hair, and otherwise adorning herself. But the Lord prostrated her in a fit of sickness that lasted thirty days, and now she stands before Jesus Christ, our true mirror, and says her prayers. She who formerly belonged to the world, is now a stranger to the frivolities of life. She rises in the morning early and hastens to prayer. She who was once a hindrance to many, now urges them to praise God. She kneels on the bare ground, and

though once so fastidious, is not afraid to soil her garments on the floor of the church. Once she had no time to think of heaven; since her illness, Jesus Christ is her only consolation."

Death not an Evil.

Once two men, in a state of wild excitement, rushed into the cell of St. Hilarion. They were robbers. "What would you do," said they, "if robbers paid you a visit?" "He who has nothing to lose," said the saint, "need not fear robbers." "But," replied one of them, "we could kill you." "You could, indeed," answered Hilarion; "but he who has a good conscience, and therefore hopes for a better life, does not fear death." The robbers were astonished at the quiet fearlessness of the good man. "Henceforth," said they, "we will rob no more; for we now know for a certainty that a good conscience is the most precious treasure in life. He who possesses one may look death in the face, and have no fear."

St. Louis and the Duke of Joinville.

St. Louis, King of France, once inquired of the Duke of Joinville if a man had to choose between the leprosy and a mortal sin, which of the two evils he should prefer. The latter answered: "I would rather commit thirty mortal sins than have the leprosy." Deeply grieved at such an unlooked-for answer, the saint said: "Surely, you cannot

know what it is to offend God ; otherwise your choice would be the other way. You know that there is no greater evil than a mortal sin. It made devils of the angels, and made men children of wrath."

But One Thing to Fear.

Olympias, a devout widow, led a pure and holy life, devoting her time, energy and means to works of piety and charity. Some powerful men of Constantinople had the cruelty to persecute her with wearisome and costly lawsuits that exhausted everything she owned. In her distress she wrote to St. John Chrysostom, relating her troubles and losses. But that holy doctor of the Church, in his answer, told her she was wrong in calling such things "troubles and losses." "For," asked he, "what misfortune, have you met? Some one might say, 'The loss of property.' But, then, are you not freed from the trouble of taking care of it, and of distributing it among the poor, as you always did? You say you are in danger of exile. Well, then, you will travel and see strange lands, doing for God's sake what others do for pleasure and at vast expense. If your enemies put you to death, they will only compel you to pay a debt a little sooner than usual. Remember the words I often said to you, and which I now repeat, 'But one thing is to be feared, namely, sin.' For it robs the soul of everything good. Therefore let us pray fervently to God to 'Deliver us from evil.'"

St. Clare.

God can pour out His vials of evil over whole nations, yet save individuals from it, as we may see in the life of St. Clare. The Emperor Frederic II., after devastating Italy, made an alliance with the Saracens against the Pope. These wild men invaded the Papal territory, and besieged the town of Assisi, where St. Clare was living with some other virgins in strict observance of monastic life. The enemy aimed its cannons at her convent. The saint, filled with a spirit of confidence, although sick in bed, had herself carried to the door of her convent, preceded by the Blessed Sacrament in a silver case. There, kneeling down with the rest of her community, she exclaimed: "O blessed Lord, wilt Thou deliver over to the unbelievers Thy poor servants, who have no other protector than Thou?" Then the Lord spoke, apparently from the ciborium: "Fear not, My daughter. I will save thee from all misfortune." Just then a panic came on the soldiers, and they beat a hasty retreat.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

The Angelical Salutation in General.

INSTRUCTION.

To the recital of the Lord's Prayer we Catholics usually add the Angelical Salutation or Hail Mary. This is becoming and proper; for if we would be assured that we are to obtain from God what we asked for in the Lord's Prayer, we should turn to Mary as to our mother, that by her powerful intercession she may strengthen our feeble prayer before the throne of her divine Son. "You know," writes St. Cyril, "that those persons have access to the court whose queen receives them, and that they receive all they pray for. And so shall we obtain all we ask for and all we desire if we have the Mother of God for our advocate before the King whom she implores earnestly for us."

The Hail Mary is a most excellent form of prayer, and deserves frequent repetition on our part.

This excellence of the Hail Mary we may discover from its subject-matter, from its effect, and its power.

The subject-matter of the Hail Mary consists of a prayer of praise and a prayer of petition. The prayer of praise consists, again, 1, of the words of the angel Gabriel, "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Luke i. 28); and, 2, of the words of St. Elizabeth, "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke i. 42); to which we add the word "Jesus." The prayer of petition consists of the addition made by the Church: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

We are indebted, then, for this beautiful prayer to the holy archangel Gabriel, to the heaven-favored St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John, and to the infallible Church. Hence whenever we say the Hail Mary we do nothing but what the angel did and said, and what St. Elizabeth did and said. We praise Mary's excellence and dignity, and with the approbation of our holy mother, the Church, we add our supplication for Mary's help in life and at the hour of death. Certainly, an excellent mode of prayer.

Furthermore, whoever has addressed this prayer with childlike confidence to the Mother of God must have discovered that it contains a holy and heavenly power. Thomas à Kempis, that profound ascetic, thus speaks on the subject: "Whenever I salute our blessed Lady in the words of the angel: 'Hail Mary full of grace!' heaven rejoices, the

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earth wonders, the devil shudders, hell trembles, sadness disappears, joy returns, the heart smiles in charity and is penetrated with a holy fervor, compunction is awakened, hope is revived. Indeed, so profound is my happiness that I cannot find words to describe it." And Marchantius writes: "Would you know the power and effect of the Angelical Salutation? Well, then, know it is a heavenly antidote which preserves the soul against the deadly bite of the serpent, and protects it against his strength; it is a rod with which thou canst strike this destructive serpent on the head and overcome its hostile attacks."

Then let us often repeat the Hail Mary with love and devotion, for whenever we salute Mary, she returns the greeting, and with genuine consolations and benefits.

THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

The Angel's Salutation.

In a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, dwelt a virgin who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The name of the virgin was Mary. This virgin served her God in purity and humility, dwelling in holy retirement and walking in the ways of justice. One day she knelt before God, absorbed in silent prayer; praising the endless mercies He had shown to her people

from generation to generation; contemplating the gradual and regular fulfilment, from age to age, of the divine promises, and lamenting the degradation in which her nation, and indeed the whole world, was then buried. Good reason had she, in truth, to add her longing prayer to that of the anxious patriarchs of old, saying: "Drop down dew, ye heavens; let the heavens rain the Just One." In such a moment of eager prayer it was that, as St. Luke relates, the angel Gabriel was sent to her, bringing the glad tidings that she was to become the mother of the world's Redeemer. The Holy Scripture goes on: "And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace: the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow

thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (Luke i. 28–38.)

Mary and Elizabeth.

When Mary received from the lips of the angel the tidings that her cousin Elizabeth, though now aged and hitherto childless, was to be blessed miraculously by God with a son, she arose hastily and went to visit Elizabeth in her mountain home, and render her what assistance she could. When Elizabeth saw Mary coming towards her, she passed into an ecstasy, and the infant leaped in her womb for joy. It was at that moment that Elizabeth addressed to her cousin the words: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (Luke i. 42.)

The Council of Ephesus.

In the fifth century of the Church, Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, a proud and haughty man, who concealed much impiety under an appearance of zeal and piety, displayed at length the venom of his heart by preaching publicly

in the church that it was not permitted to call Mary the Mother of God. The people heard this impiety with the greatest consternation. All Constantinople was excited; and the faithful were indignant at the insult offered to Mary, by attempting to deprive her of a title which had been given her from the days of the apostles. Venerable old men, who in the desert had spent their lives in the practice of the severest austerities, now abandoned their retreats, and appeared in the streets and public assemblies, to defend the honor of the Queen of Heaven, and to caution the people against the errors of the impious Nestorius. The bishops and pastors of the Church, well knowing that the whole history of human redemption would be annihilated if the error of Nestorius prevailed, undertook the defence of Mary's dignity with the greatest zeal. A general council was held at Ephesus in 431, at which bishops from various countries assisted, and over which St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, presided, as legate of Pope Celestine. The error of Nestorius was condemned, and he himself anathematized as an innovator. It is difficult to describe the joy and exultation which this decision excited in the Church in Ephesus and throughout all Christendom. On the day in which the decree of the council on the nature of Mary's dignity was solemnly announced, almost the whole city gathered before the church where the bishops were

assembled. The people awaited patiently the whole day, as if nothing was more important or dearer to their hearts than the determination of this question. At length, the doors being thrown open, St. Cyril appeared at the head of more than two hundred bishops, and announced to the people the condemnation of Nestorius and his impious doctrine. Scarcely had he ceased to speak when the multitude burst into exclamations of joy, and the whole city resounded with hymns and congratulations to Mary. "The enemy of Mary is overcome!" they exclaimed. "Joy to Mary, the great, the sublime, the glorious Mother of God!" The Fathers of the council were received by the people with loud praises, and conducted home, accompanied by innumerable torches. Costly perfumes were burned in the streets through which they passed; the whole city was illuminated; and nothing was omitted to render the triumph of Mary complete. It was on this occasion that the Church added to the angel's salutation the words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

HIGH ANTIQUITY OF THE HAIL MARY.

From an early age it was a universal practice in the Church to address the Blessed Virgin in the words of the angelical salutation. This we learn partly from the ancient liturgies, partly from the

writings of the holy Fathers who lived in the early ages of the Church.

In that very old liturgy ascribed to the apostle St. James we find the following form of prayer to Mary: "Whilst with all the saints and just we celebrate the memory of our most holy, immaculate, and glorious Lady, Mary, the ever-unblemished Virgin, and Mother of God, we recommend ourselves and our whole life to Christ our God." It continues: "Let us honor the memory of our most holy, immaculate, glorious, and blessed Lady, the Mother of God and ever a virgin, and of all the saints and just, that through their intercession we may obtain all mercy." Then follow the words of the Angelical Salutation: "Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls. It is becoming that we praise thee, ever-blessed Mother of God raised above all reproach, Mother of our God, grander than the cherubim, more brilliant than the seraphim, thou who without detriment to thy virginity hast borne God the Word. In thee, who art full of grace, do all creatures rejoice; the choirs of the angels and the human race congratulate thee, who art a sacred temple," etc.

St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, who lived in the fourth century, and who on account of his eloquence was called the golden mouthed, in his Liturgy or Mass in honor of Mary prays in the

following words, which are very similar to those above quoted: "It is truly just and proper that we glorify thee, Mother of God, the ever-blessed and immaculate Mother of our God, who art more worthy than the cherubim, and without comparison more glorious than the seraphim, and who, without detriment to thy virginity, didst bring forth the Lord: thee, true Mother of God, we praise. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls."

Also St. Athanasius, Bishop and Patriarch of Alexandria, a mighty defender of the Catholic faith against the Arians, used to address the Blessed Virgin in the following words: "We praise thee, Mary; again and again and always and everywhere blessed. On thee do we call, remember us, O most blessed Virgin, who although thou didst bring forth, didst remain a virgin. Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. The hierarchies of all the angels and children of earth praise thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Pray for us, O Lady and Mistress, Queen and Mother of God."

ORIGIN OF THE ANGELUS.

The practice of saying the Hail Mary in an alternate way is about eight hundred years old. Whilst the crusaders were marching to the Holy

Land to rescue the tomb of Our Saviour from the hands of the unbelievers, Pope Urban, in the Council of Clermont, in the year 1095, ordered the bells to be rung every day at morning, noon, and night, and the Hail Mary to be said each time. He wished by this devotion to secure the aid of Mary for the crusaders.

St. Bonaventure, that most zealous defender of the Blessed Virgin, in the chapter of his Order held at Pisa in the year 1262, directed the members of his society to notify by the sound of the bell the people of their respective districts to honor the mystery of the Incarnation, and to salute Mary.

This devotional exercise thus introduced into Western France was approved in the year 1318 by Pope John XXII., who also granted an indulgence of ten days to all those who would say it in a spirit of penance. The same Pontiff, in the year 1327, directed the Cardinal Vicar of Rome to have the bells rung every evening to remind the people to say the Angelus.

At the Synod of Vaurens, in 1368, the heads of churches were ordered to have the Angelus bell rung every morning at sunrise, and an indulgence was also attached.

Finally, during a bloody and devastating war, Pope Callixtus III. ordered that throughout all Christendom the Angelus bell should be rung at midday.

In order to encourage the practice of the devotion, Pope Benedict XIII., in the year 1724, granted to all those who would recite the Angelus daily a plenary indulgence once a month, to be gained on the day when they approached worthily the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, provided they prayed for the Church. He also granted a partial indulgence of a hundred days for each pious recital of the Angelus.

THE HAIL MARY AN EXCELLENT PRAYER.

The Blessed Virgin herself assured St. Gertrude that this prayer was dearest to her, and that she would assist the saint in death as often as she had said the Hail Mary.

The Blessed Jane of France earnestly begged our blessed Lady to make known to her what prayer was most pleasing to her. Mary revealed to her that no prayer was more agreeable to her than the Hail Mary.

Blessed Francis, of the Servants of Mary, used to say every day five hundred Hail Marys in her honor. How pleasing this was to our blessed Lady she made known after his death, for a beautiful lily grew miraculously out of his mouth.

St. Catherine of Sweden began every work, every duty, with a Hail Mary. In reward for this pious practice our blessed Lady visited her on her death-bed, and conducted her soul into heaven.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION CONTAINS CELESTIAL STRENGTH, AND AFFORDS HELP AND CONSOLATION IN SPIRITUAL AND BODILY NECESSITIES.

The Storm Stilled.

It is related in the life of St. John of God that while in a terrific storm at sea he turned with childlike confidence to the powerful Queen of heaven and uttered one fervent Hail Mary. At once the storm subsided and the sea became calm.

A Death-bed Conversion.

Some years ago a priest in Strasburg was asked to visit a sick man, an old college companion of his, who, though dangerously ill, would not listen to any suggestion to prepare for death. The priest responded promptly, and discovered at the mention of religion that he had to deal with a man who had long ago suffered shipwreck of his faith, and whose mind had been feeding on the unwholesome husks of an absurd and false philosophy. A discussion ensued, in which the sick man found himself worsted, yet he would not listen to any advice concerning his future state. The festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin was drawing near, so the priest said to his obstinate patient: "My dear friend, although you have refused me every request so far, do not refuse me,

now that you are standing on the very threshold of eternity, to say a short prayer to the blessed Mother of God. Repeat now and then one Hail Mary, and if contrition and confidence do not come to your heart lay the blame on me. If you promise to do this I assure you that on Annunciation Day you will be reconciled with God." Tears came to the sick man's eyes, and, taking the priest's hand, he promised to comply. He repeated piously several Hail Marys, and when the priest came again he found he had a different man to deal with. The Mother of Mercy had looked down graciously upon his desponding soul, and obtained for it the grace of conversion. He confessed his sins with all the signs of a true penitent, received the last sacraments, and full of faith and hope he breathed his last on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Blessed Father Salvator.

In the town of Tortosa dwelt a man who had a child so grievously afflicted that it would at times fall down and lie as if it were dead. Every natural remedy failed to bring relief to the little sufferer. One day Blessed Salvator happened to come begging to the door of the child's father's house. The latter at once fell at his feet and besought him to pray for his sick child. Salvator, feeling deep sympathy both for father and child, laid his hand on the head of the latter, raised his

eyes to heaven, said one Hail Mary, and went away. That same evening the child was restored to perfect health.

Another time the same Salvator, while going about begging, encountered a young girl who lay dangerously sick of a burning fever. Placing his rosary about her neck, the servant of God said one Hail Mary, and at once the sufferer began to grow better, and finally recovered her former health and strength.

PERSONS DEVOTED TO THE HAIL MARY.

The illustrious St. Alphonsus Rodriguez made it a constant practice to say a Hail Mary every time the clock struck. Even at night he never omitted, if he awoke.

Whenever St. Catharine went up or downstairs she used to kneel on each step, and say the Hail Mary with childlike devotion, in order to praise and honor her heavenly mother Mary.

St. Teresa used to tear herself away from all worldly affairs, and say Hail Marys in solitude. This pious practice she began at her seventh year, and continued it till her death.

St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and St. Leonard of Port Maurice used to say the Hail Mary several times in the day.

When St. Bruno founded the renowned Carthusian monastery in the forest of Grenoble he set up a shrine of the Blessed Virgin, and whenever he

came before an image of the Blessed Virgin hung up in it he would stop to say a Hail Mary.

Blessed Bonvenuta of Forli, a Dominican, said one thousand Hail Marys every day. On Saturdays he doubled the number, and was rewarded with sweet singing by the angels and a heavenly calm in his heart.

Brief Explanation of the Hail Mary.

"HAIL."

When we address this word to Mary we not only salute, but praise and honor her.

This we do because of the high distinction conferred upon her by the Lord in His merciful love, when He preordained her and selected her to be the mother of His only beloved Son, and bestowed upon her all the gifts of grace to fit her for this dignity. The second ground for our veneration of Mary is to be found in Mary herself, who accepted these graces most thankfully, corresponded with them most faithfully, and thus attained such a high degree of perfection, that in a certain sense she really deserved to become the mother of the world's Redeemer. Lastly, we honor and venerate Mary on account of the glory and power which she enjoys in heaven.

The chief excellence in all our devotion to Mary consists in imitating her virtues. Mary will recognize us as her sons and daughters when she per-

ceives in us a resemblance to her divine Son and herself. It is only then that she will bestow on us her motherly affection. All those persons practise a false devotion to Mary, or no devotion at all, who fancy that they are under her protection just because they recite daily a few Hail Marys, without laboring to amend their lives.

"MARY."

After the sacred name of Jesus there is no name on earth so holy as the name of Mary.

It contains the three following significations:

1. It signifies the sea. Mary is an unfathomable sea because of the boundless graces she received from God. "As God called the immeasurable waters the sea, so did He call the immeasurable ocean of grace Mary," says St. Augustine. In this mystical sea of grace, in Mary, are found all the graces and gifts of angels and men, of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins.

2. The name Mary also signifies lady, mistress, queen. Mary is in truth and fact a mistress, for the princes of heaven do her homage, Jesus Christ the King of kings was subject to her, and shared with her His power. He refuses no request of hers: hence St. Bernard styles her the "omnipotent advocate." If it is truly said that the elect reign with Christ in heaven, how much more truly can it be said that Mary is queen both in heaven and on earth!

3. The word Mary signifies "star of the sea." The Blessed Virgin is a veritable ocean-star; for as the mariner is guided to his haven by a star, so are Christians guided to everlasting glory by Mary's motherly intercession.

The name Mary, unlike other human names, is not merely a designating term, but contains within itself a mysterious power.

At all times the pious admirers of this sweet name experienced an extraordinary sweetness and lovableness as they pronounced it with reverence.

Furthermore, the holy name of Mary is so rich in blessings and graces that we cannot pronounce it without devotion, nor without sharing in some grace.

Finally, no general on earth is more afraid of a powerful enemy than are the evil spirits of the name of Mary. In the solemn death-hour the name of Mary is the strongest defence against the assaults of hell.

Let us then often pronounce the powerful and sacred name of Mary with devout reverence, and we shall soon find its blessings coming upon us.

"FULL OF GRACE."

We style Mary "full of grace," because she is, 1, a vessel of grace; 2, a dispenser of graces.

Mary is a vessel full of grace—

1. Because she was filled with graces even before her birth;

2. Because she always corresponded with grace;

3. Because she bore the Author of grace.

Even in the moment of her conception Mary appears before us as full of grace; for from the first instant she became the lily amid the thorns, that is, she was conceived immaculate, free from all stain of sin. This doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is founded on Holy Scripture, and on the primitive and continued belief of the holy Catholic Church.

The land in which the enemy shall sow no cockle; the burning bush, mentioned in the Book of Exodus, and which burned without being consumed; the Ark of the Covenant, in presence of which the river Jordan ceased to flow,—are all plain figures and emblems of the immaculate conception of the ever-blessed Virgin.

"Is it becoming," ask all the devout confessors and doctors of God's Church, "that she who was destined to give to the world Him who by His death destroyed the kingdom of sin should be herself tainted with sin? Should she, who was to give birth to the Conqueror of death and hell, begin by finding herself under the dominion of both?" Finally, how can we conceive the slightest taint being attached to the flesh which was to become the Word made flesh?

On account of this extraordinary prerogative of the Blessed Virgin, the Church celebrates the festival of the Immaculate Conception, which was

solemnly declared to be a dogma of faith on the 8th of December, 1854.

But Mary is full of grace, not only because she was filled with grace before her birth, but also because she continually advanced in grace, inasmuch as by her holy deportment and her good works she increased always in sanctifying grace, and thus attained to the highest degree of holiness and justice: "Thou art beautiful in form above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips: therefore hath God blessed thee forever." (Ps. xliv. 3.) St. Peter Chrysologus writes: "Other saints indeed have received portions of grace, but the fulness thereof was poured out into Mary's heart."

Furthermore, Mary is "full of grace," because she bore the Author of grace. Must not she who carried so near her heart the Lord of grace be full of grace herself? "The Blessed Virgin," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "has received such a plenitude of grace, that she came nearest to the Author of grace, and for that reason conceived Him who is full of grace."

The Blessed Virgin does not keep to herself the graces bestowed upon her in such rich abundance by God: she shares them gladly with her devout and zealous servants. By her powerful intercession with God she effects an increase of grace in the just, and a restoration of lost grace to sinners.

One proof of this truth we find in the countless

votive offerings seen at favorite shrines and places of pilgrimage, where Mary is pleased to manifest herself as the Mother of divine grace.

From all this it follows that we should often ask Mary for the graces necessary to our salvation. The just should pray for increase of sanctifying grace, and the sinner for the recovery of graces lost.

"THE LORD IS WITH THEE."

These words, "the Lord is with thee," mean and say that God is with the Blessed Virgin in a special and distinguished manner, because she is the most beloved daughter of the heavenly Father, the true Mother of the divine Son, and the chaste spouse of the Holy Ghost.

Yes, the Lord is with Mary, for with her is the omnipotence of the Father, who made her fruitful. With her is the wisdom of the Son, who prepared her to be His worthy Mother. With her is the purity of the Holy Spirit, who preserved her a pure virgin in her conception and birth. With her is the Father, who chose her from all eternity to be the mother of life. With her is the Son, who chose to dwell in her virginal bosom. With her is the Holy Ghost, who was pleased to fill her with heavenly graces, and through her to distribute them throughout mankind.

This great grace of having the Lord always with her was merited by the Blessed Virgin by being

always with the Lord, that is, always walking before the Lord in virtue and holiness.

"BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN."

Rightly may the Blessed Virgin be styled the most blessed, the most highly favored among the whole female sex: 1, because she was chosen above all other women to be the Mother of God; and, 2, because she alone is at once mother and virgin.

Hence St. Peter Chrysologus cries out: "The Blessed Virgin is in truth blessed; for she merited to conceive by the operation of the Holy Ghost and yet to maintain her crown of virginity. She is blessed because she had the honor of conceiving a child that is God, and yet remain the queen of virgins. She is blessed because she is greater than the firmament, mightier than the earth, more perfect than all created beings; and because she conceived Him who created and upholds the structure of the universe, and because she nourished at her breast Him who feeds all living creatures."

Mary is also the most blessed among women because she brought us overwhelming blessings by bearing the Redeemer of the world, and thus removing from the world the curse brought upon it by Eve.

"AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS."

The proposition "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus" is uttered in the Hail Mary to sig-

nify that the honoring of Mary is inseparable from the worshipping of Christ, and that we venerate the tree for its fruit, and the Mother on account of the Son.

Mary would never have been blessed among women if she had not brought forth so blessed a fruit, who is Jesus Christ, true God of true God.

Christ is not styled blessed among men as Mary is termed blessed among women: He is called generally, absolutely, and without limitation the Blessed One, in order thereby to signify that He is supremely honored and adored in heaven and on earth, and that there is no comparison between the Creator and the creature.

In the year 1262 Pope Urban IV. ordered that to the words of St. Elizabeth, "blessed is the fruit of thy womb," the adorable name of Jesus should be added, in order that the faithful might know who is the blessed fruit of Mary's womb, and what is the basis of the honor we show to her.

"HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD."

In the truest and strictest sense of the word Mary is the Mother of God. True, she did not bear the Divinity, but she bore a Son who is God; she bore a body with whose flesh and blood taken from her chaste substance a God was personally, inseparably, and mysteriously united. Hence the angel said to Mary, "The Holy which shall be

born of thee will be called the Son of the most high God."

This important doctrine, that Mary is really the Mother of God, the Church has always steadfastly maintained, and defended most determinedly in her councils against the heretics. As true Catholics, therefore, we are in duty bound to cheerfully believe, profess, and defend this dogma.

As Mary is the Mother of Christ and God, so is she also our Mother. For as Christ is our Brother, His Mother is also our Mother. This truth should encourage us to a childlike confidence in her help and protection, and awaken a tender love towards her.

"PRAY FOR US SINNERS."

We appeal to Mary and say, "Pray for us," because we know she is a powerful intercessor and helper before the throne of God; for she can and will pray for us.

Mary can pray for us and help us, because she is the Mother of God; for as such she can effect anything with her divine Son. "As the prayers of Mary are the prayers of a mother," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "they are in a certain sense like commands to Jesus, and hence it is impossible for her to pray and not be heard."

Mary is willing to help us by her prayers; for even when she was on earth she was merciful and loving towards the afflicted. How much more readily, then, now that she reigns in heaven, will

she sympathize with us. Furthermore, she is our Mother, and can a mother be unmindful of her children?

We say, Pray for us, and add the word *sinners*, for we are all sinners, and Mary is the refuge of sinners. "She is," says St. John Damascene, "appointed by God as a refuge for all sinners who by their sins have deserved death. In a certain sense she is compelled to obtain for such sinners as invoke her the grace of a perfect conversion and reconciliation with God, as many persons testify who by her intercession were converted and brought to happiness." Hence St. Bonaventure compares Mary to the dove which brought back to the ark the olive-branch, the emblem of peace and reconciliation.

But if the sinner would find a place of refuge with Mary, he is required on his side to be sorry for his sins. Where there is no contrition, no firm purpose of amendment, Mary's advocacy will be sought in vain. Only those who are sincere will be heard.

"PRAY FOR US NOW."

By the words "Pray for us now" we seek Mary's help and protection in this life, and beg that as long as we tarry in this vale of tears she would guard us as a mother guards her child. For the time of grace and mercy is now while we are on earth. After death comes stern justice only.

Then Mary cannot assist us, for the Father has committed judgment to the Son, and mercy only to Mary.

"AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH. AMEN."

Dreadful sufferings await us on our death-bed: the qualms of remorse for our sins, anxiety on account of the impending judgment, the uncertainty of our salvation, all trouble our poor frightened heart. To these are added the violent temptations of the enemy, who in this last dread hour comes with his final temptation, and with renewed violence, to conquer our soul. When we consider all these and the bodily sufferings, we must feel convinced of the necessity of extraordinary help and consolation, lest at the last hour we depart from the secure path of salvation. Hence we say at the end of the Hail Mary, "at the hour of our death," begging Mary not to abandon us in the death struggle, where we shall most need her help and consolation.

Nor does Mary abandon her true servants in that dread hour. Often, indeed, she sweetens the bitterness of death, brings patience and strength and courage amid the enemy's last temptations, and makes death easy and peaceful.

PRAISES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

From the Fathers of the Church.

Of the countless passages in which the piety and

love of the faithful for the Blessed Virgin have found undoubted expression, we shall select but a few of the most striking for our edification and instruction.

Thus we read in the Mass-book of St. James the apostle:

"It is becoming, O Blessed Virgin, that we should acknowledge thee to be the wholly immaculate Mother of our God, and more venerable than the cherubim and more glorious than the seraphim. Thou hast borne the Word without any stain, therefore we deem thee great. May all creatures praise and honor thee, who art full of grace. May the angels, too, and all men venerate thee and recognize thee as the consecrated temple, the spiritual garden of delights, and the pride of virgins, from whom God assumed flesh, and whom He honored as a child honors its mother."

St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, about the year 200, wrote: "As Eve was deceived by the word of the angel of darkness, and fell from her obedience to God, so to Mary was proclaimed by the word of an angel, that if she obeyed she would carry God in her body; and as the devil had induced the former to abandon God, the latter would be moved to follow and obey him, and thus become a mediator. Again, as the whole human family was made subject to death by a virgin, so was it delivered from the same death by a virgin, inasmuch as the obedience of the latter cancelled and

made good the disobedience of the former. Finally, as the sin of the first man was obliterated by the sufferings of the Son of God, so did the simplicity of the dove win a victory over the cunning of the serpent, in order that we might be loosed from the chains that bound us."

St. Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, surnamed the miracle-worker, had the happiness of being instructed in the Catholic faith by the Blessed Virgin herself in a vision. Thankful for such a favor, he never forgot to praise her before the people, and he spoke thus in her honor: "With what words shall we be able to express the excellence of the Blessed Virgin? What eulogy will be sufficient to praise her incomparable beauty? What pæan can our souls send up to her who is lauded by even angels' voices? She bloometh in the house of the Lord, as a fair olive-tree whom the Holy Ghost has made fruitful by the overshadowing of His grace, and through whom He has called us to be children and heirs of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. She is that blossoming garden of delights and of immortality in which is planted the tree of life, whose fruits preserve us from death. She is the ornament and honor of virgins, the joy and consolation of mothers, the basis of the believing, the perfect image of believers, the perfect model of the saints. With her dwell virtue and truth. She is the living spring who bore the Lord, and from whom floweth the life-giving water. All those

who cherish a sincere devotion to this holy virgin, and love her incomparable purity and sanctity, will enjoy an angelic grace."

In the fourth century, St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, wrote: "The Blessed Virgin surpasses in glory the first of the heavenly powers. Only God is above her. All that is not God she sees beneath her feet." The same saint also styles her the temple and throne of the Divinity, the priceless pearl of paradise, the mediator between heaven and earth. Then he adds:

"Through thee, O Blessed Virgin, has celestial peace been given to the world. Through thee have men been made like to the angels; through thee have they received the honorable titles of servants, friends, and children of God. Through thee has death been overthrown and hell conquered. Thou hast destroyed the idols, and brought back to men the knowledge of heavenly things. Through thee have we known the Son of God, whom thou, O holy virgin, hast borne!"

Concerning those words in the Angelical Salutation, "full of grace," St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, writes as follows: "What creature has ever been endowed with such great and wonderful graces as the Blessed Virgin Mary? To others grace has been dealt out in a certain measure, but of her it is said that she is 'full of grace.' Consider how many excellent and holy women and maidens have existed since her, and how she,

nevertheless, reached so high a point of perfection that she merited to be the Mother of God; how much grander and more wonderful her privilege to have been chosen for that dignity from among so many thousands of holy persons! But if she were full of grace before conceiving the Son of God, who can comprehend the measure of her graces after she conceived Him? Justly, then, is she termed 'blessed among women;' for the female sex was blessed through her, and the world freed from its malediction."

We shall quote one more passage from a more modern teacher in the Church, who enumerates the antitypes of the Blessed Virgin. St. Bonaventure writes: "Mary was prefigured in the spring that arose out of the earth (Gen. ii. 6); in the tree of life that stood in the midst of paradise (Gen. ii. 9); by the paradise that was watered by the river of pleasure (Gen. ii. 10); by the ark of Noe, in which the human race was saved; by the rainbow which God set in the clouds (Gen. ix. 13); by the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream (Gen. xxviii.); by the bush that burned and was not consumed (Ex. iii.); by the vessel in which the manna was kept (Ex. xvi.); in the staff of Aaron that budded, contrary to nature's law (Num. xvii. 8); in the star and in the sceptre of which Balaam prophesied (Num. xxiv. 17); in the dove which brought the bough of an olive-tree to Noe and his sons in the ark (Gen. viii.); in the stake that bore the brazen

serpent (Num. xxi. 8); in Gedeon's fleece (Judges vi.); by the house of the Lord which Solomon built, and into which the glory of God entered (3 Kings vi.); in Abigail, who made peace between Nabal and David (1 Kings xxv.); in Judith, who killed Holofernes and delivered the people (Jud. xiii.); in Esther, who saved Mardochai with his people (Esth. vii.); by the gate that was shut and through which no man should pass (Ezech. xliv. 2); in the woman whom John beheld (Apoc. xii.)."

THE LITANY AND THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The Litany of Loreto.

THE Litany of Loreto, so called from the shrine of that name in Central Italy, where it was first used, is a summary form of devotion adopted and now used by all Christendom to honor the Blessed Virgin. It consists of a series of invocations, each one of which is an expression of some sublime prerogative appertaining to her as the chosen Mother of God and Queen of heaven and earth.

Mary is the Mother of God, for she has borne for us the Son of God, who deigned to assume flesh from her body. But she is also the only one among mortals who united the dignity of mother with the far higher dignity of virgin. Hence she is the Virgin of virgins. It is for this reason that her maternal dignity is praised together with her virginity, when the Church in order to honor her entreats us in the words: "Let us praise the birth of the glorious Virgin, who while enjoying the honor of motherhood preserved the beauty of virginity." Mary is the Mother of Christ, and on

that account is also mother of divine grace. Has she not given us the greatest of all graces, the Saviour Himself? And what graces does she not impart to all those who call upon her? It is not too much for us to say, in the words of St. Bernard, that all the graces we have we receive through the hands of Mary; and that all the graces which we may still receive are not to be compared to those which we have received already. Then this mother of divine grace is the most pure of all mothers, for she was free not only from all actual sin, but even remained free by a miracle from the stain of original sin. The soil from which sprang the rod of Jesse could not lie under the blight of original sin; the sacred body that was to receive within itself the Son of God could not be in the dominion of the great enemy. Mary was conceived immaculate, and immaculate she conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; hence she is invoked as the mother most chaste, mother inviolate, mother undefiled.

Looking, then, at these virtues and prerogatives that made her worthy to be selected from all others of her sex, we have to cry out: "Mother most amiable, pray for us; Mother most admirable, pray for us." Yes, admirable truly and indeed, for a creature becomes the mother of our Creator, a daughter of earth becomes mother of our Redeemer, and the Church salutes her with the words: 'Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, who didst

carry in thy womb the Lord and Creator of heaven and earth. Thou hast borne Him who created thee, and yet thou remainest a virgin for all eternity." Mary is a virgin most prudent. She bore for us the Eternal Wisdom, and instructed the apostles in the mysteries of the conception, birth, circumcision, and private life of Christ. She was the tutoress of the apostles. She is the virgin most venerable, for she penetrated the most sacred mysteries and knew things that human knowledge could not comprehend; and yet, amid all such knowledge of divine things she remained so modest and humble and reticent that she concealed even from her spouse a knowledge of the honor that had been announced to her through the message of the angel. Again, as Mary had all authority over her Child, and as the same Son who was subject to her on earth and acceded to all her requests, even when His time was not yet come, does not now reject her prayers, when He is in heaven, she is truly a "virgin most powerful" and a "virgin most faithful," who shows herself ready to help those who call upon her assistance. Hence St. Bernard could exclaim: "O Blessed Virgin! If any one called upon thee without being heard, let him be forever silent concerning thy mercy." Mary is also called the "mirror of justice," because being free from every sin and defect she, as it were, reflects within herself the righteousness of the kingdom of God,

which He commanded us to seek first of all. She is the "seat of wisdom," for her divine Son came to enlighten every man that cometh into this world, and for that reason we in our happy redemption from darkness and ignorance of spirit salute Mary as the "cause of our joy."

When the term "vessel" is applied to the Blessed Virgin it is to be understood in the same sense as it is applied in Holy Scripture to the apostle Paul (Acts ix. 15), who is called a vessel of election, chosen to carry the name of the Lord before the gentiles and the kings, as well as to the children of Israel. The Apostle himself gives to the saints this name when he says: "God showeth the riches of His glory on the vessels of His mercy." (Rom. ix. 23.) Thus Mary is a "spiritual vessel"; for, being illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God, she was adorned with all the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. She is a "vessel of honor," for she unites within herself all that can influence reverence and respect in men, and does herself inspire unbounded respect in all who know her. Hence St. Denis the Areopagite, who travelled from Athens to Jerusalem to see the Blessed Virgin, acknowledged that he discovered in her a superhuman majesty, and felt in his own soul a most extraordinary sense of comfort and reverence. She is a "vessel of singular devotion," not only because she is to us the most brilliant example of fervent devotion, but also because she asks for us the grace that our

souls be freed from everything earthly, and thus ascend in prayer to the Lord. Now this glowing devotion, in which her soul was bathed, makes her the "spiritual rose." As the rose exceeds all other flowers of the garden in beauty and fragrance, so did Mary when on earth outshine all the children of men in her devotion, and so does she now in heaven outshine all the angels and saints. Concerning her glory, it was revealed to a pious soul that when she was received into heaven by the Lord, amid the rejoicing of the angels, the heavenly choirs, in their astonishment and admiration, recalled the words of Solomon in the Canticle of Canticles, and exclaimed: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?" (Cant. vi. 9.)

Again, Mary is compared to the "tower of David," for she is to us the tower of Sion against our enemies, and a tower of defence to all men against the hereditary enemy of the human family, the devil himself. She is, too, a "tower of ivory," for the protection she affords us may well be likened to the strength and durability of ivory, as her own purity may be compared to the clearness and brilliancy of that rare article. Through the Blessed Virgin the Lord dispenses His graces to us; hence she becomes our "house of gold," for Our Lord grants our prayers through her, as of old He granted the petitions offered to Him under the golden roof of Solomon's temple. Yes, and

she is still more to us. She is the "ark of the covenant,"—the ark to which we must have recourse if we would be saved from drowning in the deluge of worldliness and sin. She is for us the "portal of grace," through which came to us the Saviour of the world, the "gate of heaven," through whose intercession we may once more regain our hope of happiness. She is our "morning star," that continues to light and guide us even in our dreary hour of darkness, when, alas! we have turned away from Christ, the noonday sun of our life. If by our sins we offend Our Saviour, and instead of mercy deserve and expect punishment, Mary is still all goodness and love if we but appeal to her. To her should every oppressed mind, every uneasy conscience, every heart bowed down in grief and pain, address itself. For she is the "health of the sick" and the "comforter of the afflicted," who through her intercession obtain tranquillity and courage. She is the "refuge of sinners," who hope through her to secure remission of their iniquities. She is the "help of Christians," and in gratitude for being rescued from many dreadful evils, all Christians celebrate the festival of Our Lady of Victory, on the first Sunday in October, to thank her for having so repeatedly saved Christendom from the hands of the infidels and the Turks, and for having saved us from the heresies that assailed the Church in the sixteenth century. The Church sings: "Rejoice

and be glad, O Virgin Mary, for thou hast conquered all heresies."

Towards the end of the Litany the Blessed Virgin is saluted as queen. For Our Lord, on receiving her into eternity, appointed and crowned her queen of heaven and earth. She is the "queen of angels," above whom she was placed by the Lord, as the Church sings on Assumption Day: "Elevated above the choirs of angels in the heavenly kingdom is the holy Mother of God." She is the "queen of patriarchs," who longed in Limbo for the Redeemer, and who greeted with joy the hour of Mary's birth as the hour that preceded the rising of the Sun of Salvation, Christ Jesus. She is the "queen of prophets," who, enlightened by the Spirit of God, pointed to her in their predictions. Thus Sirach alludes to her where he causes Wisdom to say: "He that made me rested in my tabernacle, and He said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in My elect." (Ecclus. xxiv. 12, 13.) The prophet Micheas comforts the people of Israel with a description of the time in which she should live. (Mich. v. 3.) Mary is the "queen of apostles," with whom she dwelt, and by whom she was honored and loved as a mother and teacher. She is the "queen of martyrs," "queen of confessors," and "queen of virgins," who all walked in the footsteps of that sorrowing Mother of God and purest of virgins, drawing strength

from her sublime example and powerful prayer,—a strength which enabled them to preserve their purity and their faith. She is, finally, the "queen of all saints;" for she stands at their head in the court of heaven, and unites with them in praising and glorifying Him whose favor has glorified them.

Thus the Litany of Loreto is the expression of hearts filled with tender love and veneration for Mary as the Mother of grace.

The Rosary.

THE form of prayer called the Rosary was introduced more than six hundred years ago by St. Dominic, when preaching in France against the heresy of the Albigenses. These misguided people, among other errors, cherished a violent hatred against the Blessed Virgin, destroyed churches, burned altars and holy pictures, dishonored sacred relics, and were guilty of the shameful excesses with which the history of heresy is always accompanied. According to reliable tradition, St. Dominic was instructed to use this form of prayer by the Blessed Virgin herself. It was not only to convert the Albigenses, but it was to remain a bond of union for all Catholic Christians in their determined efforts to oppose the progress of all heresies.

Such a hearty welcome did it find among all classes that it soon spread all through the Church,

and the beads, which were its outward sign, became the distinguishing mark for all true Christians. It follows, necessarily, that such a devotion has a high intrinsic value, which commends it to the hearts and minds of all, and that it is not to be underestimated, as it sometimes is, by superficial Catholics.

Truly the Rosary is a most sacred and fruit bringing form of devotion.

It is sacred because it is made up of sacred elements, namely:

1. Of the sign of the cross.
2. Of the Apostles' Creed.
3. Of the Glory be to the Father, etc.
4. Of the Lord's Prayer.
5. Of the Hail Mary.
6. Of the fifteen principal mysteries or events in the life and death of Our Saviour, and on which we are to meditate while praying.
7. Of a prayer for the increase of faith, hope, and charity.

Can there be a more worthy prayer than such a one? Everything in it is biblical and apostolic. It would be presumption to find fault with the single parts, and a folly to despise the well-ordered arrangement of such faultless parts. This prayer is indeed a garland of roses, which we lay at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, who is herself a "mystical rose." It is a wreath of sweet flowers of many colors, in which the five

joyful mysteries are symbolized by the white roses, the sorrowful mysteries by the red roses, and the glorious mysteries by roses of a golden hue. Thus is this devotion a good one.

It is also fruitful, for it is made so by—

1. Its component parts. The Lord's Prayer must be heard, the Hail Mary must be pleasing to God, the supplications of the Church must ascend to the Blessed Virgin, the Glory be to the Father, etc., must be acceptable to the Blessed Trinity, while the devout contemplation of the sacred mysteries must have a salutary effect on our own interior dispositions, and help to shape our lives in imitation of the lives of Mary and her divine Son.

2. The union is one common prayer of all Christians in the Church who send up their supplications to Heaven.

3. The indulgences granted by the Church to those who recite the Rosary, and which may be applied to the living or the dead.

Thus the Rosary is a golden chain that unites the living and the dead, joining together the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant.

The objections usually raised against the devotion of the Rosary are frivolous and unfounded. It is sometimes said :

1. "One Our Father devoutly recited is worth more than ten such prayers when mumbled rapidly and thoughtlessly." Very true. But ten devoutly

recited Our Fathers are better than one; and we are to recite them devoutly, and not mumble them.

2. "Such frequent repetition is useless. God knows what we need." But from the earliest ages it has been customary to repeat Our Fathers and Hail Marys and other prayers, as well as the psalms and passages from Sacred Scripture. To prevent the distraction that would arise from keeping account of these repetitions, the early Fathers used a number of pebbles, which they passed from one side to the other as they finished each prayer. Then again, in the Old Law, David repeats twenty-six times in the Psalms the words: "Praise the Lord."

The three children in the fiery furnace chanted together a hymn containing twenty-one repetitions of the words: "Praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever!" (Dan. iii. 57.) Before the throne of God the cherubim and seraphim sing Holy! holy! holy! (Is. vi. 3) and the living creatures in the Apocalypse sing without ceasing. (Apoc. iv. 8.) Hence it is plain that God may be honored by a repetition of the same form of prayer.

Furthermore it may be objected:

3. "This repetition makes it impossible to pray devoutly, for it begets thoughtlessness." The very contrary is true. At the beginning of prayer the mind is seldom recollected and concentrated. It is only after some reflection that devotion comes to

us, and the deeper our meditation the more inward does our prayer become.

4. "When the people pray often, they become distracted and think of many outside things." But we may read prayers from a book, and yet let our mind wander in all directions. Whoever is not in earnest, is as careless in the one case as in the other.

We must here observe that one special festival, namely, that of the Holy Rosary, was established by the Church, and united with the feast of Our Lady of Victory in commemoration of the great naval battle between the Christians and Turks in the year 1571. It occurs on the first Sunday of October every year.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASSUMPTION.

After the death of Our Saviour the Blessed Virgin remained in Jerusalem, in company of the apostles, and especially of St. John, the beloved disciple, to whom she was intrusted by her divine Son. Even during her lifetime on earth she was an object of veneration and countless numbers of the faithful came from all countries to Jerusalem to visit her and receive lessons of wisdom from her lips.

Ancient and credible chroniclers tell us that Mary lived upon earth some twelve or fifteen years after the ascension of Our Lord. At last the

hour came when she was to be reunited to Him. Her death was the result of the intense fires of love for God that burned within her heart. The scene of her death was the room in which Our Lord had instituted the Sacrament of the Last Supper. A short time previous the Spirit of the Lord led all the apostles except Thomas to the city of Jerusalem. When she was about breathing her last, Our Lord came, accompanied by angels, and handed her soul to the keeping of St. Michael, the great archangel. Then the apostles, with a great throng of the believers, carried her precious remains to a newly-made tomb in Gethsemani. For three days the apostles remained on the spot praying and singing psalms, and mingling with their voices were heard sweet strains of angelic music.

On the third day St. Thomas arrived, and wishing to look once more at the sacred body of the blessed Mother, the lid of the tomb was lifted, but there was no body there. Then all understood that as the sacred body which had enclosed the body of Our Lord, and which had been conceived immaculate, could not be left to undergo corruption, it must have been carried to heaven. Thus to Mary could be applied the words of David: "Thou wilt not give thy holy one to see corruption."

In commemoration of this glorification of Mary the Church now celebrates every year, on the 15th of August, the festival of her reception into

heaven and her coronation. It is known as the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and is one of the most ancient established to honor our blessed Mother. As on this day it is in some places customary to bless fresh flowers and sweet herbs and other autumn fruits, it is often called Lady Day in Harvest.

THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

The Lovableness of Mary's Name.

St. Antony of Padua used to pronounce the name of Mary many times during the day and night. The very utterance of the word filled his heart with sentiments similar to those that pervaded the heart of St. Bernard when he pronounced the sacred name of Jesus. Like St. Bernard, St. Antony would exclaim: "The name of Mary brings joy to the heart, is honey on the lips, and music in the ear."

Blessed Henry Suso used to say that when he uttered the name of Mary his confidence and hope were wonderfully augmented and his love for God inflamed, and that the very name seemed so sweet to his heart that he would cry out in ecstatic voice: "O sweet name! O Mary! what must thou be in heaven, when thy mere name is love-inspiring on earth?"

Abbot Franconus said that next to the holy

name of Jesus the name of Mary is so rich in grace and sweetness that neither in heaven nor on earth is there any other name that so fills the soul of man with grace, hope, and sweetness. "For," he adds, "the name of Mary contains something so admirable, so sweet, and so godlike, that when it penetrates a well-disposed heart it diffuses in it a sweet fragrance. Another remarkable peculiarity about this name is that, although those who revere it may hear it a thousand times, it always seems new, and leaves each time traces of love and sweetness."

St. Bernard, whose heart was all charity, addressed to his beloved Mother the following words: "O great, O pious, O admirable and praiseworthy Virgin Mary! thy name is so sweet and amiable that no one can utter it without being inflamed with love for thee and for God, who conferred the name upon thee."

St. Alphonsus Liguori, that devout and faithful son of Mary, who wrote so many beautiful things about her, can hardly find words expressive enough to describe the joy and consolation he experienced when pronouncing the name of Mary. He has partially shown forth his sentiments in the following lines:

"Mother Mary, Queen most sweet!
Joy and love my heart inflame.
Gladly shall my lips repeat
Every moment thy dear name.

"Ah! that name, to God so dear,
Has my heart and soul enslaved;
Like a seal it shall appear
Deep on heart and soul engraved.

"When the morning gilds the skies
I will call on Mary's name;
When at evening twilight dies
Mary still will I exclaim."

The Power of Mary's Name.

Under the special guidance of the Virgin Mother Mary, Albert the Great became a learned and saintly man. Hence all through his life he revered her with the tenderest love, and never uttered her name but in terms and tones of profound reverence. By means of this pious practice he found help and relief in many arduous undertakings and perilous circumstances.

In the year 1322 three missionaries of the Order of St. Francis were condemned to be burned to death for defending their faith against the blasphemies of the Mohammedans. The oldest, named Thomas, wished to be the first to ascend the scaffold, but was prevented by a Mohammedan because he was old and feeble, and also might have about him some charm that would protect him against the fire. Whereupon Jacob was seized and thrown into the burning pile of wood. As the flames rose about him he was heard to pronounce the name of Mary. In a moment the flames parted,

showing the martyr stand unhurt, with outstretched arms, and praising God. As the fire would not touch him, he and his two companions were beheaded.

The wonderful power of Mary's name is specially seen on death-beds. Hence St. Camillus Lellis warned his brother friars to exhort the dying to call on the names of Jesus and Mary, as he himself always did on his sick calls.

The Festival of the Holy Name of Mary.

This festival, which occurs on the Sunday within the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, was established by Pope Innocent XI. to commemorate the deliverance of the city of Vienna from the hands of the Turks, and also with a view to have the faithful on this day beseech God, through the Blessed Virgin, for the welfare of the Church, and to thank Him for His mercies. For it was certainly a great act of mercy on the part of God to permit the defeat of the Turks and Tartars, those avowed enemies of the cross of Christ.

The Sultan Mohammed IV., conceiving the plan to extend his conquests as far west as the rivers Danube and Rhine, resolved to erect the crescent in triumph over the cross. His chief officer, Cara Mustapha, at the head of 20,000 Turks and Tartars, overran Hungary with fire and sword, and finally laid siege to Vienna, a city that was just then but poorly fortified. Terror seized upon the

inhabitants, many of whom abandoned their all and fled to distant parts. Even the Emperor Leopold fled with his wife. Count Staremberg, the commander of the imperial troops within the city, did not lose courage, and by his side stood a goodly number of the chief citizens, who were determined to save their homes or die in the attempt. On the eve of the Assumption the Turks opened fire on the city. To add to the misfortune of the inhabitants, one of their finest churches took fire from a Turkish bomb, and the conflagration threatened to destroy the magazine in which was stored their scanty ammunition. Assumption Day dawned, and the people flocked to their places of worship to implore the protection of the Blessed Virgin against the enemies of the Christian name and cause. Suddenly the fires went out, and time was given to remove the war supplies to a safe place. This circumstance revived the prostrate spirits of the besieged. The bombs and shot of the besiegers did not deter the people from praying day and night for assistance from heaven through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. On the 31st of August the enemy had so far pushed his assault that the soldiers began to meet in hand-to-hand combat.

Vienna, the bulwark of Christendom, was about to be laid in ashes when, on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, news reached the afflicted people that assistance was coming. Two days

later they beheld an army encamped on a neighboring hill, and they were delighted to recognize the banner of the brave John Sobieski, who, with the Emperor Leopold, had marched in haste, at the urgent request of Innocent XI., to the relief of their besieged fellow-Christians. On the 12th of September Sobieski and his troops heard Mass in the Church of St. Leopold. The royal general himself served the Mass, received holy communion, and at the end of the service, having placed himself and his men under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, he cried out aloud: "Now let us march against the enemy under the guidance of heaven and its immaculate Queen."

When the small but gallant army saw before them the countless array of hostile forces they felt that only heaven could achieve a victory for the Christian cause. In fact the victory was a miracle. Soon after the first attack the Tartars, breaking ranks, turned and fled, carrying along with them in their panic the better disciplined but hardly less terrified Turkish regiments. They left behind them many thousands of their dead, all their baggage and munitions of war, together with Mohammed's standard, which Queen Sobieski sent to the Pope.

The following day, the 13th of September, Sobieski entered the liberated city in triumph. He himself intoned the Te Deum with the same powerful and manly voice that the day before had

ordered the movements of his conquering soldiers. From that time his confidence in Mary never wavered, and he always had borne before his army an image of the "Virgin most powerful." Ever since the feast of the Holy Name of Mary has been observed in commemoration of that important Christian victory.

MARY, THE REFUGE OF SINNERS.

Whoever has had the grievous misfortune to offend God cannot do better than fly to Mary in a spirit of penance, to obtain, through her, reconciliation with God. Among the innumerable examples of this truth which the annals of the Church record, that of St. Mary of Egypt is particularly remarkable. This celebrated penitent was born in Egypt in the fourth century, and was converted from a sinful course of life in a very remarkable manner. She devoted the remainder of her days to the practice of the most austere penance, as she related in the following manner to the Abbot Zozimus, who met her by chance in the desert.

In the twelfth year of her age, contrary to the will of her parents, she came to Alexandria, where she spent seventeen years in the commission of every base and degrading crime. She one day saw crowds embarking for Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the cross; she accompanied them, and during the journey con-

tinued her irregularities. On arriving at Jerusalem she mingled with the crowd that flocked to the church where the holy cross was to be publicly exposed; when she arrived at the porch she attempted to enter with the rest, but felt herself restrained by an irresistible power. This happened three or four times. She was much moved; and not doubting but that her sinfulness was the cause why she was not permitted to enter the church, she burst into tears. While she lingered about the church door, sighing and weeping, and beating her breast in a spirit of compunction, she looked up to a picture of the Mother of God, painted on the wall. The sight encouraged her, and she addressed the Refuge of Sinners in these words: "Holy Virgin, Mother of God, I know that the sins in which I live render me unworthy to look up to thee. Thou art a pure and spotless Virgin. Thou who art so pure and holy must have a horror for a soul so immersed in guilt as mine is. However, I have always heard that the Saviour, whom thou hadst the happiness to bear in thy virginal womb, came into this world to call sinners to penance. I implore thee to assist me in my distress. Permit me to enter the church, O Queen of heaven! Grant that, although unworthy I may be allowed to enter, that I may not be deprived of the happiness of seeing that precious cross on which thy Son poured forth all His blood. I promise thee, in the name of the same

Redeemer, nevermore to relapse into my former offences. As soon as I shall have seen the cross I will abandon all, and go wheresoever thou, O holy Virgin, my advocate and intercessor, wilt tell me."

Having finished this prayer, she felt within herself great confidence. She made another effort to enter the church, and did not experience the least difficulty. She reverenced the holy cross, cast herself on her knees, and amidst abundance of tears, kissed the ground of the holy places; being deeply touched with the thought of God's mercy and goodness in receiving sinners whenever they return to Him in a spirit of penance. Having satisfied her devotion, she returned to the image of the holy Virgin, and kneeling down before it, returned thanks for the grace she had obtained through her, and besought her direction in her design of doing penance and reforming her life. While she thus poured out her soul before the image of Mary, she heard a voice, as if from a distance, saying: "If you will pass the Jordan, you will find rest." She immediately arose, and turning her eyes to the picture, said: "Virgin of virgins, through whom salvation has been brought to man, do not abandon me; I beseech thee grant me this favor." She immediately hurried to pass the Jordan, and buried herself in the wildest part of the desert, where she spent forty-seven years, in the practice of the most severe austerities. During

many years she was exposed to the most violent temptations from the infernal enemy of her soul, but always was assisted and sustained by Mary. "In all my combats," said she herself to the Abbot Zozimus, "I raised my heart to that Immaculate Virgin, who had been so merciful to me; I begged her to assist me in my penance and solitude, and she has never forsaken me. She has been my protectress in all my difficulties." The holy penitent at length obtained, through the intercession of Mary, the grace to receive from Abbot Zozimus the last sacraments at her death, and thus passed from the desert, which had been the witness of her extraordinary austerities, to that paradise which God has prepared—not for those who imagine they are rich in virtue, and stand in need of nothing, but for the publicans and sinners who return to Him by a sincere repentance.

Mother of Mercy.

One day a great sinner came to St. Alphonsus Liguori, and amid a flood of tears complained to him of the wretched state of her soul. The saint had deep compassion on the poor Magdalen, and, as was his wont in such cases, he directed her thoughts to the Blessed Virgin, the refuge of sinners. "Have confidence, my daughter," he said kindly, "have confidence. I will show you a path by which you may once more return to your heavenly Father. Remember that we have a

Mother called Mary. She is the refuge of sinners. What will not a mother do for her children. If she sees one fall, does she not leave the others, and pick up the fallen one? Then how she tries to soothe its pain, to brush the dust and dirt from its hands and dress! Hasten to this loving Mother. She will raise you from your fallen state and cleanse your soul from the stains of sin." The saint's advice was not given in vain. The sinner did as she was directed, and soon found that Mary is indeed the refuge of sinners.

The Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Conversion of Sinners.

The fruits of a sincere devotion to Mary as the refuge of sinners have been often exhibited, in a very extraordinary manner, in a confraternity attached to the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Paris. This parish is situated in the centre of that city, and at one time contained a population almost entirely engrossed with the cares and pleasures of life, the agitation of politics, and the amusements of the theatre. Almost every religious sentiment seemed extinct in the vast majority of the people; the church was deserted even on the greatest solemnities, and the sacraments were entirely neglected. The zealous pastor of this church, afflicted beyond measure by the evils he was obliged to witness, without being able to

remedy them, resolved to consecrate his parish to the most holy and immaculate Heart of Mary. The Archbishop of Paris approved of this devotion by an ordinance of the 16th of December, 1836. On the third Sunday of Advent the exercises commenced by singing the vespers of the Blessed Virgin, at which a more numerous congregation assisted than was wont to be on the greatest festivals. A sermon was preached on the nature and object of the devotion; after which, at the Benediction of the Holy Sacrament, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin was sung. The "Refuge of Sinners" was chanted with extraordinary fervor, and with an effusion of feeling which showed that among this congregation, consisting of from five to six hundred persons, there were many who felt the need they had of the divine mercy, and the confidence they placed in the intercession of Mary.

The pastor was kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, and felt himself deeply affected at this manifestation of feeling. He raised his eyes to Mary, and recommended to her protection this pious association. "As a sign of thy protection," added he, "obtain for me the conversion of M——. I will visit him to-morrow in thy name." This gentleman was one of the last ministers of the virtuous but unfortunate Louis XVI. He had been attached to the sect of pretended philosophers of the last century, and had not practised any of the duties of his religion since his youth. He was now

in the eightieth year of his age, and for some months had been sick and blind, although his intellect was as strong as ever. Ten times had the worthy pastor endeavored to approach him, and ten times had he been refused entrance. On the following Monday, the 12th of December, he presented himself once more, but was at first denied admittance; he persisted, and was at length allowed to enter. After some moments of indifferent conversation M—— said to his pastor, without making any preamble: "Please give me your benediction—I am delighted at your visit; I cannot enjoy the satisfaction of beholding you, but I feel your presence. Since your visit I enjoy a calm, an interior joy, which I did not know before." The worthy pastor did not let this opportunity pass without profiting by it, and completely succeeded in the great object of his visit. M—— survived until the following April, and all his time was devoted to the great concern of his salvation. He expired in the most edifying sentiments of faith and hope. This manifest benediction of God on the infant association inspired its members with increased confidence in Mary. The devotion was soon propagated, not only in France, but throughout the rest of Europe. Naples, Portugal, and Sweden are the only countries whose names are not inscribed on the register of the association at the time of the publication of the book whence these facts have been taken. We find even New

York, Charleston, Dubuque, Detroit, the Bermuda Isles, Martinique, and San Domingo mentioned as possessing members of this most amiable devotion. Pope Gregory XVI., by an apostolic brief, dated the 24th of April, 1838, erected the association into an archconfraternity, and enriched it with many spiritual treasures. The most hardened sinners have been converted in a manner that showed that these miracles of grace were the result of Mary's powerful intercession, procured by the fervent prayers of the devout members of this association.

THE PROTECTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

From the Fathers.

St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, prays thus to Mary: "Hear now our prayer, O ever-blessed daughter of David and Abraham! Be gracious to our request, and forget not thy people; for we are in duty bound to recognize thee as our Mother, Lady, and Princess, and as such to greet thee. For from thee was born the One whom we adore as our supreme Lord and God. To thee we have recourse, that thou mayest remember us, O holy, and ever-immaculate Virgin. Since thou art full of grace, permit us to share in thy abundant treasures, for the measure of praise that we can bring thee is small indeed. An archangel first sounded thy praises when he brought to thee the

honored greeting, and said: 'Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' And all the choirs of angels unite their voices in praising and honoring thee, as 'blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.' From these celestial hosts have we men learned to praise thee and do thee honor. They have placed upon our tongues the words: 'Be ever blessed to us, O Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' Thou who art our Lady, Queen, and honored Mother, be thou our advocate: the more so, as thou wast born amongst us, and as He who clothed Himself in thy chaste womb with our poor nature is our very God, to whom belong all honor and glory."

St. Ephrem exclaims: "Our more than blessed, ever-immaculate Virgin, Mother of my God and Queen of light, thou art powerful and gracious, higher than all the heavenly hosts, purer than the rays of the sun, more venerable than the cherubim, holier than the seraphim, incomparably more glorious than all the choirs of heaven. O holy Lady, thou wert the hope of the patriarchs, the longing of the prophets, the ornament of the apostles, the honor of the martyrs, the joy of the saints, the crown of the virgins. Take me, and in thy goodness keep and save me. Have pity on me, for I am a miserable sinner and all clouded in the mist of my vices, which have displeased Jesus Christ, my God and my Judge. O Mother of Mercy, do not permit the evil spirit, the sworn

enemy of my soul, to overpower me. After God, I have no other hope than thou, O holy Virgin. Thou art my haven of security amid the storms of this life; thou art my refuge and defender, my place of repose where I may be free from danger. With deep sincerity of heart and tearful eyes I throw myself at thy feet, to implore thy assistance, and by the aid of thy prayers to be received by Jesus Christ, thy Son, the author of my existence. May He not reject me because of my sins."

St. Augustine prays: "Bear our petitions, O Blessed Virgin, into the sanctuary of appeals, and obtain for us the grace of reconciliation. Thou canst excuse what we bring before thee, thou canst accept what we offer. Obtain for us what we seek, avert from us what we dread. No one is more worthy to appease the anger of the Judge than thou, who wast deemed worthy to be the Mother of the Judge and Redeemer. Help the afflicted, encourage the pusillanimous, look upon those who weep, pray for the people, assist the clergy, plead for the monks, intercede for the religious of the devout female sex. May all those experience thy assistance who honor thy name. Have compassion on the oppressed, have pity on the exiled from fatherland. To thee has been erected a royal throne by the angels in the court of the eternal King, the King of all kings, who Himself loves thee above all others as His faithful Mother and chaste Bride."

In another place the same saint prays: "O blessed Mary, who can render to thee sufficient thanks for the benefits which a lost world obtained through thy willing consent? How can this poor nature of ours, that was well nigh lost, and which by thy mediation regained the beginning of freedom, ever be able to praise and thank thee? Permit our thanksgiving to be acceptable to thee, poor and insignificant as it is, and unworthy of thy deserts. Grant our prayers, and dispel our iniquities by thy powerful intercession. Receive what we offer to thee, give what we ask of thee. Through thee do we hope for pardon of our sins and expect future happiness. Holy Mary, succor the miserable, help the pusillanimous, strengthen the weak, pray for the people, the clergy, and the devout female sex. Let all who honor thy memory feel the effect of thy assistance. Be gracious to such as have recourse to thy gentle guidance; grant their wishes. O Blessed Virgin, who wast worthy to bear the Redeemer of the world, who lives and reigns in eternity, pray for the faithful laity. Amen."

These few passages suffice to prove that the ancient Church had recourse to Mary in the same language that we use at the present day; that no new doctrine, but rather the old Catholic teaching and practice, are preached in our Church.

MARY OUR HELP IN LIFE.

Mary is the Help of Christians.

The famous victory which the Christians gained in 1571 over the Turks near Lepanto, in the Ionian Sea, will forever be a monument of Mary's title to the appellation of "Help of Christians." For more than a century before that time the Turks caused the Christians the greatest anxiety and apprehension. They gained victory after victory. God permitted this to punish and humble the Christians, and by this humiliation to awaken their faith, as well as to manifest His glory and power by honoring Mary through the wonders He was to work for her servants.

The Turkish Sultan, Selim, the son and successor of Soliman, had taken the isle of Cyprus from the Venetians, and, elated with his success, thought of nothing less than subjecting all the Christian kingdoms to his sway. At that time the chair of St. Peter at Rome was filled by St. Pius V., whose zeal for the faith and confidence in the intercession of Mary were unlimited. The Pope was greatly alarmed at the danger to which Christendom was exposed, but, with undoubting confidence in Mary, he united with the Venetians and Spaniards to repel the common enemy. There was, indeed, no proportion between the Turkish and Christian fleets, and in all human appearance it must have seemed foolish to contend with such a superior

enemy; but the holy Pope did not for a moment doubt that Mary would obtain victory for the Christians. He accordingly ordered general fast-days, and specially exhorted all Christians to turn to Mary for protection. All Europe was aroused by the approaching danger and joined in this devotion, and everywhere processions and other devotional practices in honor of the Mother of God were established. As Pius sent his blessing to John of Austria, the admiral of the Christian fleet, he gave him the strongest assurances that he would gain the battle. He ordered him, at the same time, to dismiss all disorderly soldiers, or such as thirsted after plunder, lest God should withdraw His protection from the cause in consequence of such sinners. Like another Moses, Pius raised his hands incessantly to heaven, and sought through Mary, the Mother of Mercy, the blessing of God on the Christian arms. The battle took place on the 7th of October, 1571, at Lepanto. Both sides engaged with the greatest fury, and for a while the Christians seemed to be on the point of yielding to the superior power of the infidels. Mary, however, had heard the prayers of her children, and the God of armies decided the cause in favor of the Christians. The Turks were completely beaten; they lost upwards of thirty thousand men, and their formidable fleet was forever destroyed. While the battle was raging the holy Pope was engaged in conference with the cardinals,

when suddenly stopping the discourse he raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed: "Enough of business to-day; at present we have nothing better to do than to thank God for the victory He has given to the Christian arms." The sequel showed that at the very moment in which Pius spoke these words the battle was gained at Lepanto, and the holy Pope was fully convinced that this victory was to be ascribed to the intercession of the Mother of God. To leave a perpetual memorial of this great benefit he inserted in her litany the words, "Help of Christians, pray for us," and instituted the feast of the Holy Rosary for the same purpose. Gregory XIII. ordered it to be celebrated throughout the Church on the first Sunday of October, which is therefore called "Rosary Sunday."

Gabriel Malagrida.—That well-known and heroic missionary Father Gabriel Malagrida was returning in 1749 from his arduous missions in America. He had already come in sight of land, and could discern on the shore some friends who had come to bid him welcome home, when his ship was suddenly overtaken by a violent storm. The masts were broken, the sails torn, and all the strong timbers of the vessel twisted out of place and shape. It seemed as if he must perish in sight of home and friends. He alone was not dismayed. Taking an image of the Blessed Virgin which he had always near him during his perilous missionary travels in America, he fastened it to a broken mast

and bade the crew and passengers pray fervently to the Mother of God. They had not finished their devotions when, lo! the storm subsided and permitted them to reach the shore in safety. All the saved, together with their friends, went in procession to the Lisbon cathedral to return thanks to God for having, through the intercession of Mary, Star of the Sea, brought them safely home.

Mary is the Health of the Sick.

A Wonderful Cure.—Among the many remarkable cures that have resulted from prayers to the Blessed Virgin, we will cite one that occurred in modern times, which cannot be explained naturally, and which has been examined and pronounced true and genuine by the Church. In 1823 the venerable Bishop of Marseilles addressed to his clergy a circular on the subject, and from it we quote: "Sister Mary Julia, a religious of the Visitation convent at Marseilles, had been confined to her bed with a complication of diseases for five years. Notwithstanding the assiduity and skill of physicians and nurses, she grew weaker and weaker as time passed, and even received the last sacraments. Though all expected immediate death, Sister Mary Julia was confident of recovery.

"The superioress of the convent, hearing that on the following day the religious procession of Our Blessed Lady of Grace would pass under the win-

dows of the house, felt herself impelled to have prayers said for the recovery of the afflicted sister, who persisted in saying that she would not die then, though every one else looked for her death each moment. Early in the morning on the day of the procession her bed was so adjusted that she could see the statue of the Blessed Virgin as it was carried past the house. Hardly had it come in sight when she felt her whole system convulsed, and a flood of tears coursed down her cheeks. At once her strength returned and she felt herself perfectly restored, and for the first time in many years she arose from her bed without assistance. To-day she is alive and well, as we know from personal observation. All agree that this cure was miraculous."

The bishop ordered prayers to be offered up throughout his diocese, in thanksgiving to God for this signal proof of Mary's right and title to the name of "Health of the Sick."

The Boy Odo.—St. Peter Damian tells of a poor feeble boy whose feet were so crippled that he had always to be carried from place to place. One day he was placed near the door of a church. Feeling a curiosity to see the interior of the grand edifice, he crawled inside with the greatest difficulty and managed to reach the steps of an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Charmed, in his childish simplicity, with her picture hanging over the altar, he spoke to it and said: "Dearest

Mother, please reach me your hand that I may stand up and walk;" when, lo! his childlike confidence was rewarded. His parents were astounded when they saw him come running home. This child was Odo, afterwards the illustrious abbot of Cluny and one of the brightest ornaments of God's Church.

Mary the Comfort of the Afflicted.

The Heart Relieved.—St. Francis of Sales was from his youth a devout client of Mary, and whilst a student at Paris made a vow of perpetual chastity out of reverence and love for the Queen of purity. Soon afterwards he was afflicted with a dryness of spirit that led him to the verge of despondency. His mind was haunted by the most dismal reflections, and he spent his days in weeping and groaning. One day he strayed listlessly into a church. His eyes fell on a picture of the Blessed Virgin, when, lo! a ray of new courage lit up his afflicted heart. Throwing himself on his knees, he prayed to the "Comforter of the Afflicted," when his load of desolation seemed to fall with the weight of a millstone from his breast, and he was restored to a state of peace and happiness.

A Remedy in Temptation.—St. Thomas of Villanova was so persistently and frightfully assailed by the evil spirit that he fell into a profound melancholy. His only resource was to fly to the protecting arms of the Mother of God. He gives

us the following advice: "When temptations annoy us we must do as the chickens do when they see a hawk hovering in the air above them. They hasten to hide themselves under the wings of their mother. So, too, should we, when we perceive a temptation approaching, hasten to shelter ourselves under the protecting mantle of Mary, and cry out to her, saying: 'Beloved Mother and Queen, thou must defend us; for after God we have no refuge but in thee, who art our only hope.'"

MARY OUR HELPER IN DEATH.

Mary Soothes the Last Moments of her Servants.

The blessed Father Suarez always cherished deep love and reverence for Mary. He died so happily and peacefully that in his last moments he was heard to say, "I could not have believed that death is so sweet."

Mary Imparts Strength to her Clients on their Death-bed.

In the year 1628 died a pious German princess, whose painful death-agony lasted thirteen months. During all this time she never uttered a complaint or showed a sign of uneasiness. All who saw her attributed her patience to the intercession of the "Health of the Sick," to whom the dying person had always been piously devoted.

Mary Helps her Clients in the Final Assaults of the Devil.

St. Andrew Avellino. — St. Alphonsus Liguori assures us that St. Andrew Avellino in his last moments underwent such a struggle with the tempter that his fellow-monks about his bed trembled with fear and anxiety. Their only comfort was that their dying brother, when his sufferings were greatest, would keep his eyes fixed on an image of the Blessed Virgin. They remembered, too, that he used to say that Mary would be his protector at the hour of death. At last he became tranquil, and bowing his head towards the picture, as if in gratitude for Mary's help, he smiled sweetly, and peacefully breathed his last.

The Blessed Ulfer.—Blessed Ulfer, a monk of the monastery of St. John in Langres, France, was always a devoted servant of Mary. Being skilled in medicine, he was sent by his abbot to the monastery of St. Germain, where several of the monks lay sick. After prescribing the necessary medicine and giving directions to the nurses, he expressed a wish to return home, for he had himself become quite ill and felt that he was about to die. His sickness grew apace, so that he could not leave. As he lay on his simple mattress he became terror-stricken, kept his eyes closed, and refused to speak, nor would he be comforted by the friendly monks. And behold ! Mary appeared to him in a

vision and said: "Ulfer, why are you so sad? What do you fear? Not death, certainly?" "Yes," he replied, "I am afraid to die." Mary answered: "Be of good cheer: when the hour of your death comes I will be here to assist you." Then she vanished, and with her all fear left the hitherto troubled heart of Ulfer. He sent for the abbot and all the members of the community, related to them what had happened, and then died peacefully and full of hope and resignation.

Mary will not Permit her Servants to Die Without the Last Sacraments.

Father Auriemma relates the history of a poor shepherdess who had so great a devotion to the Blessed Virgin that her greatest delight was to retire to a small mountain chapel dedicated to Our Lady. There she poured forth her heart in prayer before her "Good Mother,"—for that was the name by which she addressed her—incessantly repeating the angelical salutation, "Hail Mary, full of grace." Her piety found such solid satisfaction in this simple exercise that she often remained in the chapel for several successive hours, while her flock pastured before it.

The image of the Blessed Virgin which was in this chapel was a simple and unadorned statue. The pious girl made for it a rustic but becoming mantle. She made a garland of some flowers which she had gathered in the neighborhood, and

kneeling before the altar she presented it to her "Good Mother," saying, "Hail Mary, full of grace." Then ascending the altar she placed this simple but beautiful crown on the head of the statue. "Mother, dear Mother," she said then to Mary, "I would willingly place on thy head a crown enriched with gold and precious jewels, but I am a poor shepherdess and can only offer thee this garland. Accept it as a token of my affection. Thou knowest how I love thee; I can only say Hail Mary."

Such simple piety and artless love could not pass unrewarded. This zealous servant of Mary fell sick, and was soon reduced to the last stage of the malady from which she suffered. At that time two members of a religious order who were travelling in that district sat down to rest under the refreshing shade of a tree. Both fell asleep, and both had precisely the same vision. They beheld coming down from heaven, like a golden cloud, a band of beautiful virgins, in the midst of whom was one of surpassing beauty and majesty. On being asked whither she was going, she replied: "I am the Mother of God, and I am going with these holy virgins to visit a dying shepherdess who during her life visited me frequently." The vision then vanished. On awaking from sleep they communicated to each other what they had seen and heard. "Let us also go," said they, "and visit this faithful servant of Mary." Providence con-

ducted them to the cottage of the poor shepherdess, who had attained a high degree of sanctity by the practice of her humble duties. They found her stretched on a pallet of straw, exhibiting in the lily-whiteness of her features the purity of soul which had distinguished her, and in the beautiful expression of her countenance a confirmation of the vision they had been favored with. Turning her eyes towards the missionaries, she welcomed them, and thanked God that her prayer had been heard and that now she could receive the last sacraments and die peacefully. As the missionaries were concluding the prayers after Extreme Unction and Viaticum, this devout client of Mary whispered: "O pious, O gentle, O sweet Virgin Mary," and expired.

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